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SMITH'S

MAY
1912

MAGAZINE

15
CENTS



SHORT STORIES BY ELMORE ELLIOTT PEAKE, EDWIN L. SABIN, MARION SHORT, HOLMAN F. DAY, ALMA MARTIN ESTABROOK, EDITH SUMMERS UPDEGRAFF AND OTHERS

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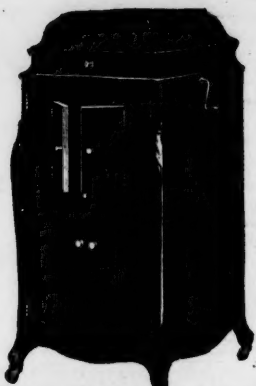
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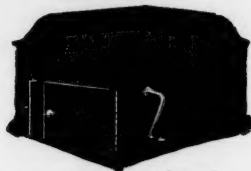
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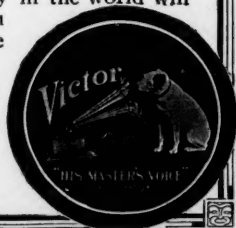
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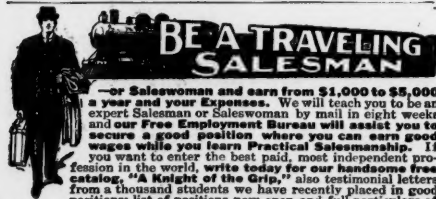
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Vol. XV

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 2

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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 reach us daily from victims of such swindlers.

TO THE READERS OF SMITH'S MAGAZINE

**Beginning
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next
issue
32 pages
of text
will be
added
to SMITH'S.
Each
number will
contain
180 pages
of fiction,
making
it the
largest
illustrated
fiction
magazine
in the
world.**

FOR some time we have felt that in SMITH'S we have been somewhat hampered by lack of space we could devote to fiction. There are serials which we feel that our readers should not miss, there are shorter novels which we wish to give you complete in one issue. In the case of a serial or two-part story we want you to have big installments. At the same time we are unwilling to cut down the number of short stories in each issue.

THERE is only one way in the world to solve a difficulty of this kind. That is, to make a bigger magazine. We have decided to do that. The change will take place with the June issue, out on the stands a month from now. With the next issue the section of sixteen pages devoted to portraits of stage favorites will be omitted. We think that just at present, at any rate, when the theatrical season is over, you would prefer more fiction to this feature. In place of the sixteen portraits we will give you thirty-two pages added to the one hundred and forty-eight pages already devoted to serials, short stories, and complete novelettes. This will bring the size of the magazine up to one hundred and eighty pages of fiction. It will make SMITH'S the biggest illustrated fiction magazine published anywhere regardless of price.

THE June number which marks the inception of this increase in size is not only the biggest number of the magazine we have ever sent

TO THE READERS OF SMITH'S MAGAZINE—*Continued*

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32 pages
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in the
world.**

to press, but one of the best. It contains a complete novel, "Fugitives from Eden," by Izola Forrester, with whose work all magazine readers are more or less acquainted. "Fugitives from Eden" is a story of to-day, with its scene laid in the West. It is a love story of real people, and yet with a romantic quality. You will remember it for a long time.

BESIDES this there is the first installment of a great two-part story, by W. B. M. Ferguson, author of "Garrison's Finish" and "Zollenstein." This new two-part story is a drama of married life really gripping in its intensity. You will read it in two installments. Ordinarily a story of this length would run as a serial in three or more numbers, but the increased size of the magazine enables us to give it to you in two parts.

BESIDES these two features there are in the next issue of SMITH'S fifteen short stories. They are by such writers as Parker L. Fillmore, author of "The Hickory Limb;" Holman F. Day, Edwin L. Sabin, Anne O'Hagan, Ruth Kauffman, Anne Witherspoon, Emma Lee Walton, and Ellen Childe Emerson. The magazine is big in something else beside physical bulk. It sets a new standard of excellence in fiction. Every story has some distinctive quality which marks it as out of the common, and every story makes a special appeal to women. You cannot afford to miss this June issue. It is a newer, bigger, better sort of magazine than you have ever known before.

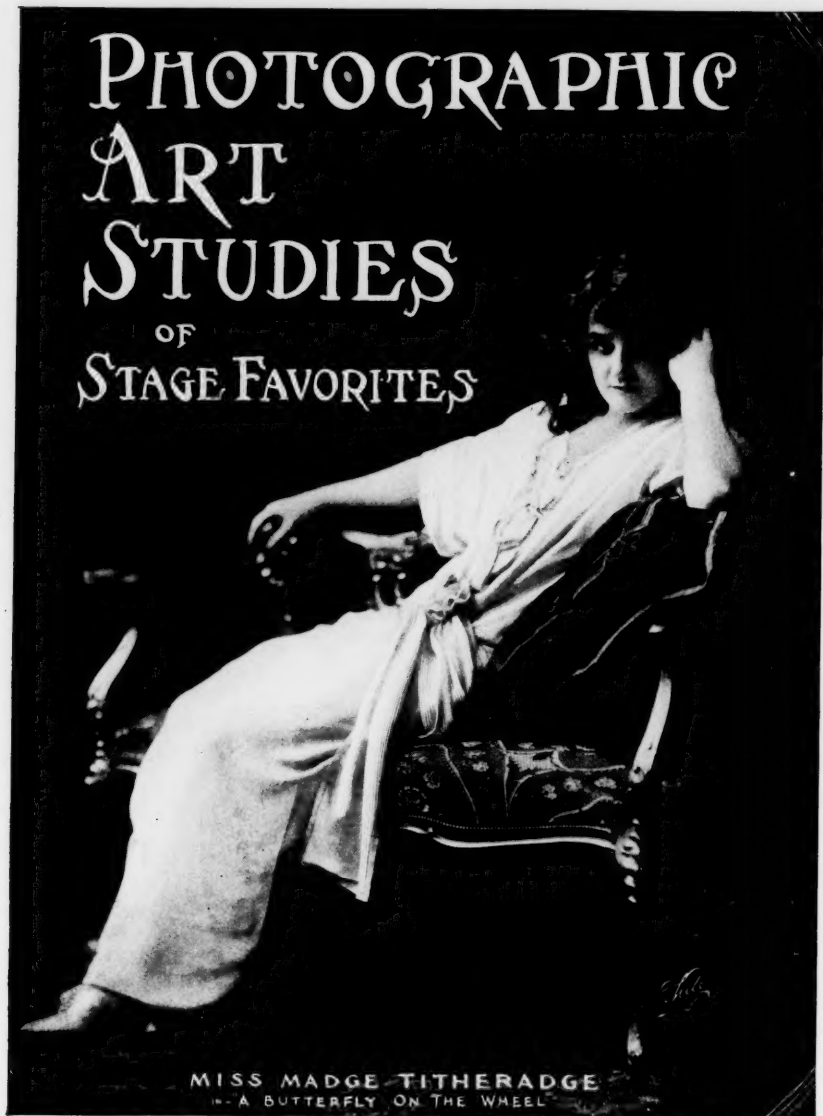
SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 15

MAY, 1912

NUMBER 2

PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES OF STAGE FAVORITES



MISS MADGE TITHERADGE
IN - A BUTTERFLY ON THE WHEEL



Photo by Bange, N. Y.

MISS GRACE EMMONS
In "The Wedding Trip"



Photo by Bangs, N. Y.

MISS DOROTHY JARDON
In "The Wedding Trip"



Photo by White, N. Y.

MISS FAY Bainter
In "The Rose of Panama"



Photo by White, N. Y.

MISS VIOLET ROMER
Classical Dancer in "Kismet"



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MISS VIDA WHITMORE
At the Winter Garden



Photo by White, N. Y.

MISS JOSE COLLINS
At the Winter Garden



Photo by
James & Bushnell, Seattle.

MISS ANNA WHEATON
In "He Came from Milwaukee"



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CHAPINE
Prima Donna with "The Rose of
Panama"



Photo by Moffett, Chicago

MISS OZA WALDROP
In "Speed"



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MISS EDITH TALIAFERRO
In "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm"



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MISS LAURETTE TAYLOR
In "The Bird of Paradise"



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MISS FLORENCE ROCKWELL
In "A Fool of Fortune"

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MISS MADGE TITHERADGE
In "A Butterfly on the Wheel"



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MISS FRANCES STARR
In "The Case of Becky"



Photo by Bluffett, Chicago

MISS LOTTA ENGCL
In "Everywoman"



Lansing's Daughter

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "The Quest," "His Mother's Room," "Harriet Vonner's Martyrdom," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

CHAPTER I.

HILDA came out of St. Peter's-by-the-Sea with a shining look upon her young face. The hour was five in the afternoon, the month April. In the west the sky was beginning to glow from horizon to zenith with pale, pure gold, where the sun was gathering his glories that he might scatter them later in spendthrift beauty of pink and primrose. The air, not yet warm, was nevertheless full of spring promises—softnesses, capriciousnesses, wooings, and rebuffings. And through all its coquetting between March and May ran the steady salt savor of the ocean.

Hilda, lifting the radiant eyes of youth to the beauty of the heavens, drinking deep the wonderful breath of the sea and the spring, gave an audible sigh of utter satisfaction.

She had been the first of the choir to leave the church after the hour of practice on the Easter music. The others had, as usual, lingered to talk of choir matters, of parish matters, of village matters. All of these topics Hilda scorned with the intensity of eighteen years. The alleluias of the last hymn were echoing in her ears, throbbing in her veins—how was it possible to loiter, talking of trivialities, with those glorious

peals still sounding, triumphant, and piercing, and sweet? She was by no means sure that she believed the doctrine the words of the hymns proclaimed, but she was sure with every fiber of her young being that she believed in beauty, in triumph, in the splendor of life, and death, and pain; and how, *how*, when the world was so marvelous, and music so all pervasive, could she bear to accede to Miss Dalrymple's request, and wait to walk through Elm Street with that estimable spinster and organist?

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea was by the sea only by courtesy. Once, in the old days, before Chelton had added to the remnants of its colonial existence the modern features of a small manufacturing town, and to those the further adornments of a modest summer resort, St. Peter's did in truth, as well as in name, look straight across a half mile of downs, edged on the east by a rocky promontory, to the arm of the ocean on which Chelton nestled. But now it was only the salty flavor of the air that made one immediately aware of the appropriateness of the church's name—that, and, after occasional storms, the loud wash of high waves at the foot of the streets that had grown up between the church and the shore.

Hilda, tingling with life and the rap-

ture of song, hurried out of St. Peter's neat inclosure, and, instead of turning her face homeward along Elm Street, went swiftly seaward. As heartily as she desired to avoid commonplaces with Miss Dalrymple, so did she desire to avoid household amenities with her Aunt Serena. She wanted to be alone, with the sea, and the sunset, and the vibrations of the organ in her veins, and the beat of glorious words in her ears. She wanted to catch, to snatch, the fine, golden, tempestuous rapture of life; and one might as well expect a night-ingle to sing in Aunt Serena's maroon and mahogany parlor as for life to sound there its glorious, piercing notes. The best melody for which one might hope in that dull, comfortable room would be the purring of the tortoiseshell cat, or the hum of the copper kettle on the hearth trivet; and these were not melodies to content eighteen years, with spring, and sunset, and Easter alleluias in the air.

She sped through the quiet little street, past the comfortable, modest houses that she knew, past the shut and boarded cottages of the summer colony. At the foot of the street a high, steep set of steps led down to the shingly beach. She climbed down, sure-footed despite the damp, slippery coating the winter had applied to them. She drew a deep breath when she gained the sand. The land curved graciously here, so that it seemed to embrace the blue bay. Straight out to the east a line of little islands inclosed the water. To the north a bold, rocky cape jutted out; beyond that the woods came down to the very edge of the water—woods where the black of the evergreens was shot now with the silvery spring promises of the other trees.

Hilda stretched her arms wide to it all—to the headland and the hemlocks, to the young green of willows, and to the opalescent, pearly tints of the water, calm now, and faintly colored with premonitions of the sunset. She ran, fleet and sure of foot, along the pebbly beach.

"Oh, I love you, I love you, I love you!" she cried to the wonderful earth.

Her delicate, intense, little face was

afire as she said it; her slim, small body was alive with it—the wonder and rapture of the universe. Then she walked more sedately for a while, though she took her small toque from her brown hair, and swung it by the elastic which childishly fastened it beneath her twisted braids. And by and by the hymn which she had just been practicing burst from her lips in a strong, pure voice, not drowned even by the gentle plash of the waves against the sands and pebbles of Chelton Cove:

"Jesus lives! our hearts know well
Naught from us His love shall sever;
Life nor death nor powers of hell
Tear us from His keeping ever.
Alleluia!"

On the "alleluia" she skirted a bowlder that marked the end of the pebbly beach, and the beginning of the long, pointed jut of rocks out to sea. And, rounding it, she came face to face with a man who was eagerly looking toward the spot from which her voice had emerged, and from which she, according to all the laws of acoustics, must also appear.

Hilda paused abruptly, embarrassment coloring her face a rich red. Aunt Serena had always warned her against the silly custom of raising up her voice outside the edifices designed for singing, and always prophesied that some day she would wish she had not been so theatrical. Well, she wished it now, as this stranger looked at her with a compelling admiration, an insistent demand.

"Oh!" said Hilda flatly.

And then she essayed to pass, as though there had been no more in the meeting than there was in meeting a stranger on Main Street, in front of the Chelton House. But this stranger was different.

"Oh, I say! Please!" he entreated.

Hilda's instructions in etiquette from Aunt Serena and her other teachers in the practical arts of life had not provided for this emergency. She hesitated, blushed, and then looked at the young man out of warm, straight-glancing, friendly eyes.

"I beg your pardon?" she said inquiringly. "Did you wish to—to ask me

something?" For was he not a stranger? Might he not desire directions?

"I want to ask you a lot of things," replied the young man promptly. And then, as Hilda's face stiffened, and her slight young figure grew a little rigid, he hurried on: "Please forgive me! I don't mean to be impertinent. But—I can't believe that fate sent you singing over these sands this afternoon, just to pass speechlessly out of my knowledge. Do you?"

It was an interesting theory, and Hilda, in her heart, held it to be not at all untenable; but in spite of that, in spite of the conviction within her that the dull conventions of Chelton were not destined to be the limit of her social opportunities, she remembered that she was Miss Kirby, and the discretion and dignity of countless generations of Kirby women spoke in her veins.

"I thought," she said, with an aloof air of politeness and precision, of which her ancestresses might have been proud, "that there might be something definite which you wished to ask me. Since there is not——"

She inclined her head slightly. She had managed to replace her hat, and her salutation was not without sedateness.

"Please don't go like that," the man pleaded. There was the zest of adventure in his blue eyes, and something within her responded to the look. "I'll get myself properly introduced to you to-morrow—I swear it! Warren Lansing, painter—thirty years old, bachelor, white."

Hilda laughed. It was more in response to his gay manner than to any wit in his words. "Ah," he cried, in mock relief, "that's better! Shall I go on? I'm on the North Shore making studies of the spring and the sea." He indicated a sketcher's outfit in the nook of rocks where he had been sitting. "And—and spring and the sea incarnate came singing their song of triumph and resurrection; and you expect me to act as though I had just happened to see one of two thousand women come out of a Fifth Avenue millinery shop!"

"I—I don't know what to say," faltered Hilda, the ladies of the Kirby

blood struggling within her to subdue the lawless worshiper of beauty and of gladness that had run caroling along the sands, with arms outstretched to embrace the joy of the waves and the sunset.

"Well," he suggested, "I have been fairly autobiographical."

She smiled faintly, hesitatingly.

"I am Hilda Kirby, do-nothing, eighteen, spinster, white," she paraphrased him. And then she took a sudden, determined step backward on the beach. "And I am very sure," she said, in a new manner, "that I should not be here like this. Good-by."

He thrust his sketching paraphernalia hastily together, and overtook her before she had gone fifty feet.

"See here," he said earnestly, "I can't let you go like this. Look——" He fished about in the pockets of his Norfolk jacket. "Here are my credentials."

He flourished a typewritten sheet before her; it bore the letterhead of a big New York publishing house. It began: "My dear Lansing." So much she saw even in the second in which her gesture repudiated it.

"I'm up here making a series of blameless pictures for a perfectly blameless book," he declared. "I'm staying at the inn at Gloucester. I came over here on the trolley this morning. I'm respectable—I swear it! Please confront me with your stern father, and let me satisfy even him—and then let me hear you sing again."

There were warmth, candor, fun—a dozen alluring qualities—in his voice. Hilda smiled in irrepressible response to them, though her brown eyes were grave enough as she answered:

"Ah, but you see, I have no father or mother, and nothing on earth which you might be able to prove to my Aunt Serena Kirby about your respectability would balance the fact that you had made my acquaintance un-introduced!"

"For pity's sake—as Aunt Serena Kirby herself would probably say!—aren't that sunset and that sea that shines under it, and that we both love, and that joy of spring that rang out in



"I am going away, Hilda, but you, my sweetest, are coming with me!"

your voice—aren't they introduction enough?"

They had reached the slimy green flight of steps that climbed back into Chelton from the beach. Hilda stood firmly at the bottom one.

"Good-by," she said, for the second time.

"You are not going to let me face Aunt Serena?"

"Not for worlds!"

"Or walk along the street back there with you?"

"No."

"Very well. But—I shall be in that nest of bowlders where the cove ends every afternoon until I hear you come singing along the beach again."

"Good-by," said Hilda, firmly and noncommittally.

"Good-by, Miss Hilda Kirby, spinster—no, good-by, incarnate vision of the spring."

Now, the young men of Chelton were not accustomed to talk in this fashion, and Hilda's heart beat unevenly as she climbed the steps. At the top she wrestled with a strong temptation to look back and see if he still stood at the base

and gazed after her. But she forbore. The ladies of the Kirby family had always conducted themselves with dignity as well as discretion; Hilda felt that it behooved her to hold to the former virtue the more closely because she felt that the latter had slipped slightly away from her.

It was dusk when she entered the maroon and mahogany parlor of Miss Serena Kirby. She was guiltily glad that the lamps were not yet lighted; she had no wish to show her face too openly to her aunt. She feared that it was more flushed than exercise alone would have flushed it. She feared that the alleluias surging in her heart would light strange candles in her eyes.

"You are very late," said

Miss Serena, not accusingly, but mildly interested. "Did you go with Susan Dalrymple after practice to see her hat?"

Some such mighty expedition to the Chelton milliner's had been planned, Hilda remembered.

"No," she said, stabbing her own headgear very attentively with her hatpins. "No. I went down Surfside Street to the beach, and walked a while."

"It was a lovely afternoon." Miss Serena thus declared her sympathy with her niece's outdoor mood. "I've been working in the garden myself. There's quite a row of crocuses up, south of the house. And the daffies are coming on."

Hilda murmured inarticulately in her throat. It seemed to her that her body was vibrating as it sometimes vibrated in unison with the pealing organ at church.

"I told Hexie to make Graham popovers for supper," pursued Miss Serena.

Hilda seldom had a mind above Graham popovers; she had still a child's simplicity of taste and appetite in edibles. But again she only murmured something unintelligible.

"Perhaps," said Miss Serena, "you had better light the lamp."

Hilda turned to the lamp, praying that nothing should reveal to the clear vision that gleamed behind Miss Serena's spectacles the fact that she was cherishing a mighty secret.

"Of course, I shall never see him again," she excused her want of frankness. "If I expected to see him again, I should, of course, *of course*"—she was quite emphatic with herself—"tell her. But it would be absurd to say that I met a man on the beach—" She fumbled awkwardly with the chimney.

"For pity's sake, child!" said Aunt Serena, whereat Hilda laughed foolishly. How had he known that her aunt said "For pity's sake!" so often? How was it that she herself had never happened to notice the fact before? "For pity's sake, child! Are your fingers all thumbs? Here—let me!"

And, in her kind, competent, authoritative manner, she took the match box from Hilda's blundering fingers, and lit the lamp.

Hilda slid quickly to the piano. She could sit at that with her back toward the room, and could still save her face from auntly inspection. Her skillful fingers ran quickly down the keys; she glided into a "Spring Song" of Schubert.

"That's right," said Aunt Serena, comfortably reaching after her knitting bag. "I feel like hearing music. Ah, Hilda, you do play well!"

She was no believer in indiscriminate praise, or even in discriminating praise. But the spring afternoon in her garden, among the young things that were bravely pushing their fair golden and pink and white heads out into the unknown world, had softened her toward all brave young things; had thawed a little layer of ice which she, in common with many other middle-aged ladies of Puritan ancestry, felt to be a very safe and prudent covering for the emotional nature.

And Hilda did unmistakably play well. She had a native talent for music, and she had received excellent instruction. Chelton had been blessed with a

teacher of surpassing merit when Hilda was a child—a woman who had given up a career as a pianist to marry a Chelton lawyer, and who put all her old passion for her art into the work she undertook as a teacher. And Hilda had been her star pupil.

Aunt Serena had skimmed on many things—bulbs imported from Holland, seeds imported from England, new chintzes for the bedrooms, real lace for her fichus; it was a more bitter penance for her to wear imitation edgings than it would have been to go hungry—in order that Hilda might have thorough teaching. So that now, when she sat in the lamplight, and listened to the flowing sweetness of her niece's playing and praised it, she was not merely offering the young girl the unwonted and dangerous gift of flattery, but she was justifying her own past sacrifices and her own past sternnesses. Only she could tell what work it had been to establish in Hilda a regular habit of practice.

One thing after another rippled from the tips of Hilda's fingers, but in them all—the old familiar things, the simple ones, the new, the involved—there was a fresh note, a sort of vibrant power. Aunt Serena felt it vaguely, but without misgivings. It spoke excellently for her insistence upon regularity in practice, she told herself, that Hilda should be improving, even now, when Mrs. Fenwick's lessons were over and done.

And Hilda, whatever notes she struck, however she kept her eyes upturned to the St. Cecilia in the oak frame above the piano, saw only the sea, palpitant and glistening beneath the glorification of the evening sun, saw the sands, the rocks, and the bold, conquering blue eyes that had looked at her.

"Supper," announced Hexie briefly from the door.

Hexie was born with an aversion to undue expenditure of speech, but as she had no such foible in regard to the expenditure of what she and Miss Serena called "elbow grease," no objection was ever taken to her terseness.

The swinging lamp that hung exactly above the center of the dining table il-

lumined Hilda's face clearly for Miss Serena for the first time that evening. At sight of the soft carmine that dyed the pale oval of the girl's cheek, of the light in her brown eyes, which she kept half veiled by her lids, a sudden fear smote the older woman.

"Was Mr. Grant at choir practice?" she asked.

Mr. Grant was the fascinating and unmarried rector of St. Peter's-by-the-Sea. The irresponsibility with which he exerted his fascinations was a theme upon which the ladies of Chelton, especially such of them as had never happened to be its victims, were eloquent. Miss Serena, who was as sparing of gossip as her maid-of-all-work was of all speech, wished that she had listened more, asked more, about his methods. But Hilda raised her dark, thick-fringed lids, and met her aunt's inquiry with a blank stare.

"Mr. Grant?" she repeated, as though she had never before encountered the name of that estimable clergyman. Then, with a fresh accession of color at her own stupidity, her absent-mindedness, she added: "Oh, Mr. Grant! No, he wasn't there. The only ones there were—" And she recited the little list of unromantic impossibilities.

Miss Serena was convinced, but she was also uneasy.

"She will soon be a woman," she told herself that night, as she sat reflecting on the edge of her bed. "She will soon be a woman."

She sighed heavily. From the time when she had first received the orphaned child into her prim home, she had realized her own incompetency for the task laid upon her; she had not understood children, she had not understood young people. But she had "somehow" managed. Now, she told herself anxiously, she did not understand women—she did not understand even the one methodical, cool-blooded woman whom she had known best and longest—herself. How, then, in the name of common sense—common sense was the goddess most frequently invoked by Miss Serena Kirby—was she to be of any help to a woman whom her intuitions, though not

of the keenest, told her to be anything but methodical, perhaps anything but cool-blooded? Well, she must go on as she had gone on all these fifteen years—doing the best she could, and doing it, not waveringly, not questioningly, but firmly, decidedly.

"I'll set her to work to-morrow on Bancroft and a crocheted quilt," she told herself before she knelt for her few minutes of humble converse with her Maker. "There's nothing like a stiff dose of history and a big piece of work to keep a young woman's fancies from running riot. And if I can manage it we'll go to Penobsquam Camp this summer. It's a good, healthy life, out of doors, and there aren't many young men." Which was quite true, the only masculine holiday makers at Penobsquam being college boys, and a few elderly retired business men, ably protected by their elderly wives. She felt that perhaps these arrangements did not entirely dispose of dangers to a young girl on the threshold of womanhood, but she could think of no others.

"After all, she's a Kirby," concluded Miss Serena, and forgot the anxiety she had felt at sight of Hilda's flushed cheeks in the strength imparted by that thought.

CHAPTER II.

It was three weeks later. Spring had come leaping all along the coast. Trees had budded into leaf and blossom, the woods were reddened through their tender greens with the red of young maples. Cherry trees in farm dooryards wore their white bridal finery. The grass was soft and verdant. Even the bare rocks that skirted the northern end of Chelton Cove seemed to have clothed their granite bareness in some soft, springlike grace.

In the nook among the bowlders, high beyond the reach of the encroaching tide, sat Hilda, and flung below her was Warren Lansing. They could not tell how often they had been there thus together, since the afternoon of their first encounter. But to-day, instead of the sheer, unsullied, excited joy of meeting,

there was a constraint, a fear—Hilda could not define it. Its only outward manifestation was that Warren did not talk as fluently as usual.

There had been a long pause between them. Finally he broke it.

"This has been the happiest time of my life," he stated. He did not look at her, and did not see the startled light that leaped into her dark eyes. "Please say that you have enjoyed it, too," he added. "Say that you have been happy in your benevolence to the poor way-farer."

He turned toward her now, leaning upon an elbow as he looked up at her. He could see the throbbing in her throat above the low collar of her sailor blouse. He could mark the stabbed look in her brown eyes. But she answered him, after a second, calmly, courteously.

"Of course, you must have finished your sketches by this time."

"I had finished them the afternoon I first saw you," he said, growing ardent as she seemed cold. "I have been staying only to see you—Hilda, dear!" He reached for her ungloved hand, but she moved it gently, unobtrusively, away. "Hilda! Say that you are not sorry I have stayed."

The forlorn child took a fresh grip upon her courage. All the centuries of women who have essayed to meet light love with lightness, to hide laceration beneath gayety, stood by her, and all the generations of the Kirby women who had known how to be dignified. She achieved a smile—a poor, set, little smile, but still a smile—and she said gently:

"Of course I am not sorry that you stayed. I appreciate the compliment you imply. And—and—I shall watch for the appearance of the book with— with so much interest."

There! She had done it without tears, without the disgrace of a palpable break in her voice.

He looked at her, fire glowing in his brilliant blue eyes. He had half dreaded a scene, but on the whole that would have been easier to handle than this labored ease and coolness. He wished to see some sign of feeling.

"And are you," he asked, with a little note of tender mockery, "as glad that I am going finally as you are glad that I stayed? Are you glad to see the last of me?"

She braced herself to make the light reply:

"The last of you? Oh, it will not be that! One is always running against people in the world, isn't one? And whenever I see your work, I shall feel that this good-by was not 'the last' of you."

She did not deceive him with her pretense of coldness, of lightness, but she compelled his admiration; she aroused within him the dominant desire of his life, in so far as it touched his relations with women—the desire for mastery.

"Hilda!" he cried, with sudden passion. "Hilda! Don't play, don't pretend that it has all been an episode, an ephemeral nothing, with you. It has not been so with me." He snatched her hand, he kissed it. "I am going away—but you are coming with me! You shall not stay here in this cold, unlovely, prim little place, wasting your gifts, wasting your glorious fire. You shall come with me, to wonderful lands; you shall see beautiful cities and bright waters. And the music you shall hear and the music you shall make! I am going away, Hilda, but you, my sweetest, are coming with me!"

His arms were around her, his lips against her glowing cheek. But she did not relax in his embrace.

"Don't you love me? Don't you love me, after all?" He held her at arm's length, that he might read her face. "Surely you—you—a girl like you—you have never met me here day after day, have never let me— Ah, Hilda, you do love me!" The glowing face was hidden against his shoulder.

"Ah!" the girl cried as she released herself from his arms. "I do—oh, you know that I do! But you were cruel to me at first, when you pretended that it was all a game that was done with. You were cruel! And—anyway—"

She paused, and he watched her interrogatively.

"And, besides, I don't know that I

would not almost as soon have you go away and forget me and this spring at Chelton, as to appear before Aunt Serena and tell her." She laughed nervously.

He looked a little blank, a little annoyed.

"Why tell Aunt Serena? Why not just come with me? We'll send her word from Boston—after—after we're married." He brought out the words with an effort.

All the clear color ebbed from her small, proud, clear-cut face.

"Of course," she said, "I should never dream of doing a dastardly thing like that to the woman who has reared me. And I should never dream of doing an underbred thing like that, in any circumstances."

He looked at her, slight, ardent, spirited. He desired to possess her; if that possession required the consent of an Aunt Serena and a village of Chelton and a St. Peter's-by-the-Sea—why, so be it! His holiday was turning out somewhat other than the one he had planned. He had never intended to hamper himself by marriage; but, then, it need not be so hampering. She was an orphan—it would not be like marrying a tribe of meddlesome relatives as well as a bride. And he wanted her.

"Come on to Aunt Serena!" He ended his swift reflections with a laugh. "I'm game. On—on to Sebastopol!"

"Oh, Warren!" cried the girl, crumpling against him limply, and letting the tears flow unrestrained now that all her misgivings were appeased. "Oh, Warren! I am so happy. I had such a black minute—I thought—I thought— Oh, I don't know what I thought."

He kissed her tenderly enough.

"I know what you thought, foolish puss," he told her. "But I assure you I am not a Lovelace, capturing innocent damsels, and bearing them off willy-nilly. Oh, I'm a very steady-going citizen, as I shall be glad to show Aunt Serena. Only—I bargain for one thing, since you refuse to do the obviously sensible, simple act of eloping: There must be no long-drawn-out agony of clothes, and engagements, and all that.

No—if we're to be married——" Inadvertently he used the conditional form of speech; it was something of a surprise to him to find himself on the verge of matrimony; he had come to the rendezvous that day expecting no such outcome. But then he always had been a man of impulse. "If we're to be married, let's be married at once, and we'll go abroad the week after next, as I had planned anyway."

"The week after next?" faltered Hilda.

"The week after next," he repeated firmly. He looked down at her, fluttering feebly against this inexorable haste. "Why not? What is there in Chelton to hold either of us? I have work to do abroad—you shall work there, too, if you wish it. You shall study music. You shall have your voice tried by the best people in the world. And—oh, my dear, don't you know what the spring, with all its raptures, and music, with all its pain, and joy, and longing, really meant for you this year? It meant that your heart was breaking through a chrysalis, and was fluttering out into the world of love—of love, and infinite yearning, and infinite satisfactions, my own! Why should we stupidly delay our happiness because Miss Smith was married in white satin? White satin! Ye gods! If weddings aren't the grotesque things! Surely, Hilda, you don't want one of those vulgar shows for the townspeople?"

"No," she whispered. "But—I'll go home first. I'll—have it over with Aunt Serena myself. And—don't be afraid, dearest. I shall not let her thwart us. I'll go now. I'll tell her you'll be there at"—she glanced at her watch—"at five. I shall have made it all plain to her. And everything shall be as you say."

She left him, walking swiftly along the beach. Her girlish air of timidity had vanished; she marched as directly toward her ~~bad~~ quarter of an hour as a soldier under orders. It occurred to him, watching her graceful figure in its retreat, that there were Spartan qualities in the girl to whom he had just engaged himself.

"Perhaps it would be as well if Aunt

Serena did thwart us!" he murmured to himself. But the man of impulse in him downed the more calculating selfish creature. "No! By Heaven, I want her, the sweet, fiery little thing!"

CHAPTER III.

"But what I don't understand," persisted Miss Susan Dalrymple, "is where Hilda met him. He's handsome, I'll grant you that, and I don't wonder that she fell in love with him. But I don't understand where they met."

Miss Serena Kirby, grim, self-contained, sat in her maroon and mahogany parlor, surveying the closed piano, and listening to the prattle of her old friend. She had not the slightest intention of enlightening Susan Dalrymple as to the place where Hilda had met the husband with whom, two endless hours ago, she had gone out into the unknown world. She had not the slightest intention of proclaiming the fact that one woman of the Kirbys had so far forgotten her dignity as to "pick up" an acquaintance on the beach, for all the world like a servant maid from one of the summer cottages. She had not the slightest intention of revealing the fact that another of the Kirby women had not known better how to take care of a young girl committed to her charge. At the same time she had no wish to deceive by any verbal means. It was therefore better to keep silence—if she could.

"Where did they meet, Serena?" demanded Susan, suddenly abandoning indirect tactics.

"Susan," answered Serena deliberately, as she reached for her knitting bag, "I am not as inquisitive as you. I did not pin Hilda down to the exact



"Where did they meet, Serena?" demanded Susan, suddenly abandoning indirect tactics.

spot. I only know that it was while he was in Gloucester making sketches for the deep-sea stories of that man—what's his name?"

"In Gloucester? Oh, then it must have been when she went over to see Lucy Pratt," said Susan Dalrymple, relieved. "That was in February—she ain't been over since, has she? Well, it's a pretty short time to get to know a man well enough to be willing to start up and follow him to the world's end. I never saw the man yet I'd feel well enough acquainted with in four months to go following him away from my own home."

She caught a grim, slight smile on Miss Serena's lips, and she blushed. Then she sighed.

"Ah, well! Maybe I'd have been better off if I had," she remarked vaguely. Then: "It was a queer sort of wedding, wasn't it?"

"It certainly wasn't splurgy, if that's what you mean," Miss Serena acquiesced coldly. "Now, Susan, there's no manner of use beating about the bush with me. You want to know all about it, so as to talk it over with all the town. Well, you might as well have it straight.

They got married without any fuss and feathers because that was the way they both wanted to get married. They got married without a long time of nudging, and grinning, and fool-joking on the part of Chelton because that was the way they wanted to do it. I will grant you that things may have been hurried up a little at the end, because he had to get ready to go to Europe the week after next, to make some more pictures to illustrate some new book. And you can tell all of Chelton that wants to know it that he satisfied me he was what he said he was, and not a murderer in disguise, which is what you'd like to think him because his great-grandfather ain't buried in Chelton churchyard. But there are plenty of good folks in the world whose great-grandfathers ain't buried there, else the world would be enough different from what it is. And I reckon he and Hilda have about the same chance at happiness that any other two have—no more and no less. And that's all I've got to say on the subject."

She ended with a vicious thrust of her steel needle through a ball of gray worsted, and eyed Miss Susan in a way singularly suggestive of the needle thrust.

"Well, if you're satisfied," chirped the caller, "I reckon no one else need worry about it. I expect you'll be right lonely now, Serena?"

"Oh, I don't know," declared Miss Serena valiantly. "A woman that uses her time right hasn't any too much for sitting and moping. I never cosseted myself much with Hilda's company, even when I had it."

Thus she presented a brave, noncommittal front to the curious world of Chelton. And even to herself she denied the ache in her heart, the fear that troubled her sleep at night. Somehow, through some inadvertence, she had failed in her duty toward her brother's girl. Somehow, somehow—and the trouble was that she had not the least idea how! She could not quiet her stern conscience with easy excuses about the attraction of youth for youth, about the mysterious influences of spring, and sea, and song. Her philos-

ophy made no allowance for such influences.

No—she had failed, through ignorance perhaps, perhaps through lack of love! Perhaps she had not loved the child as a mother would have loved her. Perhaps that cold, unemotional atmosphere in which she had reared the girl—quelling many a tender impulse in order to keep the atmosphere cold, and clear, and hard—perhaps that was what had driven her into this passionate piece of recklessness.

Should she ever forget, could she ever forget, the rigid look with which the girl had met her first utter refusal to receive the man, to consent to the marriage? Should she ever cease to hear the deliberate young voice saying: "Very well, then. I shall go with him anyway. I shall elope." That invincible determination—that was a Kirby trait! But the Kirbys had not been in the habit of applying it to deeds of lawlessness and danger.

What would the end be? Miss Serena found herself praying that it might be she, and not the child, who would suffer, if suffering must be the outcome of the marriage. And she did not know that she was praying the universal mother's prayer, out of the universal heart of motherhood.

CHAPTER IV.

It was November, eight years later. Miss Serena, unchanged, seeming almost incapable of change, in her iron-gray angularity, sat in her unchanged parlor. She was drawn up before the fireplace, and the skirt of her blackish-gray serge frock was folded back over her knees, as though to court the direct warmth of flames through her flannel petticoat. But no flame leaped upon the clean brick hearth. The green-painted wood basket beside it was empty.

"Cup of tea?" demanded Hexie, briefly and belligerently from the door, but Miss Serena shook her head.

"You'd orter," declared the handmaiden explosively.

"No," said Miss Serena firmly, and Hexie withdrew, frowning portentously.

A newspaper lay upon the square, drop-leaf, mahogany table in the center of the room. Miss Serena reached for it, and read the double-column piece of news which had considerably changed the aspect of her world.

JONATHAN E. LATIMER ARRESTED.

ACCUSED EMBEZZLING TRUST FUNDS.

Beneath there was a long account of the steps which had led to the arrest of the pillar of society who was trustee for half the widows, and orphans, and spinsters of the North Shore. After many years of probity and cautious investment for his charges, it had unfortunately occurred to Mr. Latimer one morning to speculate in his own behalf. It soon became necessary for him to draw for his own purposes upon the money committed to his care. For a while he paid the dividends and interests due upon the trust funds out of capital, and then had come the untoward day when there was no more capital with which to pay dividends and interest. Mr. Latimer was in prison, awaiting trial, but Miss Serena Kirby, three-quarters of whose infinitesimal fortune had been committed to him, took no great comfort in that thought.

Three-quarters of her tiny income gone—and all of Hilda's. Hilda's required a financial microscope to be recognized as income at all, to be sure. But that probably would not make it any more agreeable for her to lose it. Well, she, at least, would not be dependent upon herself. She had a husband, eminent, increasingly successful, Miss Serena gathered from the art journals which she had religiously read since Hilda's marriage; and surely eminence and increasing success meant increasing prosperity. Hilda need not be seriously concerned about the fall from financial grace of Mr. Jonathan E. Latimer. But she, Miss Serena, was not so fortunately circumstanced.

The bell rang imperatively. Miss Serena heard Hexie in unwilling conversation with some one at the front door. She waited, with unwonted patience, for the explanation.

"Telegram. Sign here," commanded Hexie. "He wants to know is there an answer?"

Miss Serena adjusted her spectacles more firmly, braced her granite spirit for a new disaster, and tore the envelope open. The message was dated at New York, and it read:

Clemence and I arrive Chelton Thursday afternoon.
HILDA LANSING.

This was Thursday afternoon, and Miss Serena, staring at the date again, discovered that the telegram had been filed in New York the night before. She commanded the boy's presence, and, in the manner of one visiting the sins of the whole Western Union Company upon his inadequate shoulders, asked the cause of the delay. The youth ascribed it to that one unarrainable breaker of contracts—the act of Providence. Storm along the coast had put the wires out of order for twelve hours, he announced succinctly.

Miss Serena signed the receipt, and dismissed him.

"Hexie, Miss Hilda and her little girl will be here this afternoon," she said calmly, as though Hilda had been in the habit of dropping in every week or so, instead of having disappeared entirely from Chelton on the afternoon of her wedding. "Get her old room ready—and the little one across the hall. And bring some wood for a fire here. And I think you'd better make some Graham popovers for supper."

But for all the casual air with which she spoke, her heart was beating unevenly. Hilda coming home—alone! Hilda, whose letters, after the first few months of her married life, had been remarkable chiefly for the number of sheets she could fill without telling anything that her aunt could possibly wish to know about her. Hilda coming home alone!

But perhaps she was not alone. Perhaps her husband was with her, but was remaining in New York while she came back to Chelton for a visit. Perhaps—but what was the use of sitting here, and speculating about what she would know in an hour or two? She had much better busy herself in helping Hexie.

So she fell to work in her old, grim, efficient manner, and when Si Jones' musty station hack rattled up to the door, the rooms were ready for the guests, and the fire sparkled on the parlor hearth. Miss Serena, who was standing by the window watching for the travelers, hurried to the door before they could ring. Si was lifting a small, foreign-looking box of a trunk off the back of the hack, and a slight woman in black was walking up the gravel path, holding the hand of a slim, rather, tall, child, also in black.

"Why, Hilda! Why, Hilda!" stammered Aunt Serena, drawing the travelers into the shelter of the hall.

"Where'll I carry the trunk, Miss Kirby?" asked Si.

Miss Serena was glad to have her attention diverted from the black-robed figures to something very definite and practical. She gave minute orders about the placing of the trunk. One would have thought the square, rectangular, old dwelling house a labyrinthian maze.

And then she turned again to her guests. She longed to gather Hilda into her arms, but the years in which she had repressed such longings exacted their toll of her now. She could only give her the cool, little, unconvincing peck upon the cheek which had been their accepted salutation after absences in the old days. But in her one quick glance at her niece's face, beneath the high hall light, she learned that her prayer of eight years ago had not been heard. It was the girl herself who had suffered from that ill-considered, hasty marriage, and the marks of suffering were upon her face, as unmistakable and as cruel as scars.

"And this," said Miss Serena heavily, "is your little girl. How do you do, my dear?"

Clemence stared out of piercingly brilliant blue eyes at this grim, gray person. She dropped a deep curtsy—it was before the days when American children curtsied—and in a fine, flute-like little voice she told her great-aunt, in French, that she carried herself very well, thank you, and that she hoped her great-aunt carried herself well, also.

Miss Serena Kirby was not accustomed to being at a loss in her small world of Chelton, but she was distinctly abashed now.

It was Hilda who saved the situation with some few words. And then the group in the hall melted, the tired child was fed and put to bed, Hexie served the supper, and at last the two women faced each other in the parlor.

"Your mourning, Hilda?" demanded Aunt Serena. "What does it mean?"

"It means," replied Hilda, strangely composed, "that Warren died suddenly last month. I came back as quickly as I could. There was no use in writing. He had no near relatives of his own. He wanted to be—to be buried over there. He hated this country. He—well—no matter. I attended to everything there, and then I came home."

"He—he was not sick long?"

In spite of herself Miss Serena's voice faltered. That young, tensely proud, unrelenting face opposite hers—what did it mean? That voice, cold, self-contained—where had it acquired that note of bitterness?

"So far as I know," replied Hilda, still with that awful air of composure, "he was not. He was staying at—at a place in the French Pyrenees. I was not notified until near the end of his sickness. It was a sudden, sharp attack of gastric trouble, so the physician said. I— Oh, Aunt Serena, I shall have to tell you some time. I shall have to tell you some time. But to-night—let me forget everything except that I am at home again, that I am at home with my child!"

The icy composure had gone from her now. The sweet, broken voice, with its confession of infinite loneliness, of infinite homesickness, was the voice of the girl who had once sung alleluias. In her heart Miss Serena gave thanks—giving, but aloud she merely said, with her usual brusqueness, that of course Hilda must be dog-tired, and that she should go straight to bed.

"And to-morrow," said the girl, "we'll talk about plans, and ways, and means."

The phrase recalled to her aunt's mind the depredations of Mr. Jonathan

E. Latimer. But those, along with the experiences which had marred and scarred Hilda's face and soul, were put aside until the morrow.

CHAPTER V.

"Doesn't the child speak English?" demanded Miss Serena sharply, when Clemence, with a ripple of French words, had left the house in the charge of Hexie.

Miss Serena was reddened by annoyance. Strange children were hard enough for a woman of sixty to become acquainted with, but strange children who jabbered a foreign tongue were quite out of the question. Hilda flushed uncomfortably.

"No—not much. She'll soon learn now that we have come home. She's quick at languages. She speaks Italian almost as well as French."

"Well," observed Miss Serena dryly, "of course, I've never had the experience of being a mother, so I can't tell what notion I might take if I were one; but I somehow think I'd have my child taught my language along with those of the rest of the world. English strikes me as a very good tongue."

"I might as well tell you all about it now," answered Hilda abruptly. She fixed her dark, brooding eyes upon the fender. "I might as well do it, and be through with it. You will find Clemence a little French girl, as far as training could bring that about. She's French in name—"

"I always wondered why you called her that. There never was any Clemency in our family." Miss Serena determinedly Anglicized her grandniece's name. "Was there in—in your husband's?"

"No, I don't suppose there was. I know very little about my husband's family, except that he seemed ashamed of it," answered Hilda, with bitter contempt. "But the child was named for a—for a friend of his." A bright red stung the cheeks that had seemed to Miss Serena's eyes so pitifully white. "A friend of his." She repeated the words with deliberation.

"A friend of his?" Miss Serena echoed the words witlessly.

She had been reared in Chelton; she had never read a French novel in her life, and the English ones upon her bookshelves were chiefly Scott and Dickens. Thackeray she eschewed because he seemed to her cynical, and unwilling to celebrate the good in human nature. So that her niece's words, and even her niece's flushed face and proudly defiant eyes, conveyed no very definite impression to her mind.

"Yes. Oh, Aunt Serena, try to understand without making me say too many hideous things, that I was married to a bad man—to a selfish man—to a cruel man. To a man that learned to hate me, that loved to humiliate me," she ended, in a lower voice.

"To hate you?" cried Miss Serena, bewildered. "But, Hilda, he—he—why did he want to marry you so, then? Learned to hate you!"

"He wanted to marry me," replied the young woman brutally, callously, "because he saw that it was only by marriage that he could possess me; he would have much preferred a less lasting union, I assure you. He wanted to possess me simply because I was something new in his experience—I was a new flavor, a fresh zest! I told you that he was ashamed of his family. I think they were all good, plain, hard-working farm people out in Wisconsin. I think his father had married a Swedish immigrant girl. And his early associations were with rough, plain people. Then he developed his gift—he was a good painter, Aunt Serena."

"Yes. Go on," said the older woman impatiently, as the younger one paused, musing.

"Yes, I will. I was only thinking how capriciously talent is bestowed. Well, some one—some teacher—discovered his ability. He was trained. He came East. But even here I think his associations were rather the bohemian crowd than—our sort. And so, when he met me, he met something a little different. And so he wanted to savor it to the full. And he always took what he wanted. Always, always! So



It was Hilda who saved the situation with some few words.

—so he married me. And in three months he could almost have killed me for having tied him. I interfered with his freedom, with his pleasure, with his sport. I had brought him nothing except the flavor of novelty, and that was gone—so soon! I had not even brought him money. And in Paris—in Paris—you remember we went there from home?”

Miss Serena nodded.

“In Paris,” said Hilda, sighing, “we met a rich woman—older than I—as old as he was, I think. And with crude appetite, and great, lusty health, like his. And money—loads of money! And he knew that but for me he might have had her and her money. She—she was named Clemence.”

“My dear!” cried the shocked woman in the armchair. And then: “Hilda, Hilda, why didn’t you come home to me? Why didn’t you come home to me?”

The girl flashed a strange look at her out of her somber eyes.

“I would not have come home to Chelton with that tale for worlds!” she

cried passionately. “No—I had insisted upon my own way; I had snatched my own life. And—nothing would have brought me home! Not if he had killed me!” she added illogically.

“Oh, he would have been glad enough to have me leave him,” she went on. “He would have been glad enough to have me divorce him. But I couldn’t. I had my pride.” And it looked out of her eyes inexorably, indomitably.

“And then, of course,” murmured Miss Serena conventionally, “he was the father of your child.”

The face opposite her grew more rigid.

“Yes,” said Hilda. “God help her—he was the father of my child! And all my life must be for one thing only—to undo the wrong I did her when I gave her that man for a father!”

The words flared out like the cry of a zealot. Aunt Serena felt herself chilled and frightened by them, and by something unsaid.

“Hilda,” she said, in low, frightened tones, “don’t you—don’t you *love* your little daughter?”

And Hilda’s dark, brooding eyes met hers with no reassuring light, no quick upleaping of affection.

“Do I?” she asked, in reply. “I don’t know, Aunt Serena. I don’t know what love is, or what it means. I know that she—that baby—was the instrument through which he tormented me. He took her education away from me, he took her very nourishing away from me. He put her out to nurse, the way those French people do. He had some shadow of excuse. I was very ill when she was born. You see, I had come to under-

stand his nature, but I had not yet adapted myself to life with him. So—so I was very ill. Melancholic—almost mad, I suppose. And so he put the baby away. And when I was better, there was still the French nurse in the house. And it has always been so since. He has chosen her teachers, her companions. He forbade me to let her learn English. A nation of hypocrites, he said, a language of hypocrites—”

She broke off, shuddering. Miss Serena shuddered in sympathetic horror.

“And had you no friend all that horrible time, my poor child?” she asked. “Did you bear it all alone?”

Hilda's face softened, her hard eyes grew almost misty.

“There was a little while I had a friend,” she said. “A little while.”

Something about the quality of her musing silence half frightened her aunt. But the Kirbys were courageous folk. She shook off her vague misgiving, and demanded:

“How did you lose her? Did she—go away—or die? Or did he make it too hard for her to bear—your husband, I mean?”

Hilda's eyes were still bright with the warm recollection that had for the moment banished the bitter memories of her life with Warren Lansing.

“It wasn't a woman,” she said. “It was a man.”

In the social code of the Chelton of Miss Serena's generation, men were not the friends of women, unless they happened to be clergymen, doctors, or the husbands of feminine intimates. Hilda's reply, therefore, struck a worse terror to her aunt's soul than anything she had said before.

“What do you mean?” she asked harshly. “If you were friends with any man, weren't you friends with his wife, too? What do you mean?”

“This man was not married, Aunt Serena,” answered Hilda composedly.

“Was he an old man?” Aunt Serena snatched at that saving straw, but Hilda shook her head, with a smile.

“Oh, don't be unhappy, Aunt Serena,” she said. “He was good to me. He saved my reason, I think, in the days

before Clemence was born. But that—that was all. He—he went away after a while. He came back to this country. He was a newspaper man, and he was called home.”

She broke off with a faint sorrow in her voice, very unlike the bitterness with which she spoke of her husband.

“Well, I'm mighty glad he was called home,” declared Aunt Serena emphatically. “I don't hold with all these new-fangled notions of friendship between unhappy, young married women and kind-hearted young men. I'm glad he was called home! I should have thought your experience with that—that—with your husband and his precious crew would have shown you enough to make you careful about friendships with men.”

“You are quite right—it did,” retorted Hilda. “As there was nothing on earth Warren Lansing wanted quite so much as to get rid of me in one way or another, you may be quite sure that I conducted myself with discretion. Since I wouldn't divorce him, and come back home here to be pitied, and sneered at, and laughed at, he would have been very glad of the chance to divorce me. Oh, he laid traps for me! He had friends who were willing to oblige him by leading his frigid American wife into folly.”

“But—I think I committed my last folly, Aunt Serena, the day I married him. And now you know everything about me, or at any rate you know enough. I want to forget it all. I want to rid my mind of the pollution of those days. I want to—oh, how I want to make up to Clemence for making her the daughter of such a man! That was the reason I stood straight and walked straight all those years—even that first year, when I was so ignorant, and so heartbroken, and when I had a friend. It was because I meant that if one of my child's parents was a pleasure-seeker, the other should be able to bear pain. It was because I meant that if one of them was selfish to the core of the heart, the other should not flinch from any sacrifice.”

“You asked me if I loved her. I don't know. It sometimes seems to me

that the bubbling spring of what one calls love has been utterly dried up in me. But I mean to devote my whole life to her—if that is love."

"I'm afraid," said the old woman, with melancholy wisdom, "that the bubbly kind is better in the long run. The kind you speak of—it is like an aunt's." She smiled sadly. "And see what a botch the aunt's kind made of things, Hilda! See how I let you go, how I lost you, cost you happiness! Oh, what a botch I did make of it!"

"Nonsense!" cried Hilda tenderly. "There was something headstrong in me. Ah, let us not talk of it. Let us talk about what we are going to do forever after. I want Clemence to have a good education—a boy's education—a scientific education. So that she can never be the victim of her own emotions," she added, with untested trust in the results of educational methods.

"I don't know how you're going to give it to her," said Aunt Serena, with sudden remembrance of Jonathan E. Latimer. "That is—I suppose your—your—that he left something?" She could no longer bring herself to call Lansing her niece's husband.

Hilda shook her head.

"Nothing but debts," she replied. "He made a lot of money, but he spent more. He denied himself absolutely nothing when he had funds. And he gambled. And always lost," she added, with a slight sneer. "Once he told me that I should gain nothing by clinging to him like a leech—he would see to it that there was nothing 'in it' for me if he should die first. Well—he saw to it. But I thought that with what little I have, and some piano pupils— Oh, I have worked hard at my music all this time, Aunt Serena. It kept me alive sometimes when I should have died without it. I thought that with those things—"

"My dear," said Serena Kirby heavily, "of course, you and your child are welcome to all that I've got. But, as far as I can make out, that isn't much more than the roof over our heads. And you—you haven't anything. And as for piano lessons, there's been a Miss

Remsen, a pupil of Leschetizky's, and she's got every pupil that can pay a decent price. If you could get your old place in the choir, now—they're paying a little salary to the singers; but they've got a good contralto—"

"Stop a minute, auntie!" cried Hilda, at last. She had been too much stunned for speech at the beginning of her aunt's revelations. "What do you mean? What has happened?"

And Miss Serena told her the tale of the respectable Mr. Latimer, now awaiting trial on an already admitted charge of wholesale embezzlement.

"But there's more chance for you as a singer," she went on eagerly, anxious to drive away the stony look from Hilda's face, "than as a piano teacher, here in Chelton, anyway."

"I can't sing any more," Hilda answered quietly. "My voice failed me after Clemence was born. I can't sing—except little parlor singing."

The door opened, and Hexie, angrily flushed from her exertions with her foreign-speaking, foreign-acting charge, came into the room. Clemence walked sedately to her mother, and began fluently to declare her opinion of Chelton. It was not at all a favorable opinion, and only the medium through which she conveyed it prevented its being very distasteful hearing for Miss Serena, who firmly believed that the inhabited globe contained no other spot quite so generally desirable for sane and proper residential purposes as Chelton.

Hilda listened to the little girl's flow of French, and frowned a trifle. She put her arms about the child, and tried to reprove her gently for discourtesy, but Clemence wriggled out of the embrace, and stated coldly, and very clearly, that she disliked the village, and also the gray great-aunt whom she was bidden to treat with more consideration.

"I do not like her," stated Clemence succinctly, in faultless French. "She is old and ugly. I do not like old and ugly ladies. I do not like this house. It is all corners, and it is gray—like the lady. I do not like gray things. I like the pretty pink house at Mentone, and the

jasmine, vines, and the oleanders. When shall we leave this land and go again to Mentone?"

Hilda was devoutly thankful in that moment that French had not been part of a young lady's training in the days before Aunt Serena was old, and ugly, and gray. But she sent the child from the room with a rebuke. So far she had always been able to command Clemence's obedience, even though she felt the child's impulses antagonistic to her own. And then again she took up with her aunt the question of ways and means.

Upon one thing she was passionately determined—Clemence should have the broad, severe, unemotional training which should help her escape the emotional pitfalls of young womanhood. She should know her ecstasies and her tremors for what they were worth. And she should have, too, that high and lofty ethical training which should make her father's faults as impossible to her as her mother's suicidal folly.

But whence was the money to come for such an education? What could she do, not only to insure this rigorous, fine, expensive training for her daughter, but to help buy bread for her aunt and herself? It was indeed the most inopportune time for Mr. Latimer to have chosen for dishonesty with other people's money! However—somehow, somehow, she should manage. Such purpose as hers could not be suffered to fail for the mere lack of an income.

But though she knitted her brows sternly, and compressed her lips, the golden path to competence was not immediately made clear.

CHAPTER VI.

In the small cubby-hole of an office adjoining the city room of the *Morning Conservator*, Callahan sat at his roll-top desk in the midst of a floor billowing with the day's papers, a sort of lighthouse in a stormy, surfy sea. It was three in the afternoon, and comparative calm had descended upon the establishment in which the respectable sheet was produced. On a big chart

spread before him on the desk, Callahan had a compendium of the day's assignments, and the men who were covering them.

The force had scattered to the gathering of news, and had not yet begun to return with its gleanings—except Miss Halsey, unhappily struggling with an account of a stormy morning session of the annual convention of the Daughters of the Mexican War.

Now and then an office boy appeared at Callahan's elbow, and silently tendered him a damp copy of the latest edition of the evening papers. Frowning at the big sheet spread before him, Callahan suddenly struck the bell on his desk. A tow-headed youth, with an air of immeasurable familiarity with life, responded to the summons.

"Ask Miss Halsey to come here!" commanded Callahan.

Miss Halsey, with a worried look, left the Daughters of the Mexican War in the midst of their strivings, and made her way to the corner cubby-hole.

"How are you on music?" demanded Callahan abruptly.

"I don't know a single thing about it," replied Miss Halsey, with unmistakable emphasis and pleasure. She seemed to assert that she had no intention of adding to the fields of human endeavor which she already "covered" for the *Morning Conservator*. She seemed to assert it with a fearlessness which only twenty-four years of service to that dignified molder of public opinion could warrant. Then she added cautiously, as one who would fain keep curiosity from landing her in a position which she did not covet, but who nevertheless had her curiosity: "Why?"

"You may have noticed that the Metropolitan Opera Company opens the opera season to-night," replied Callahan satirically, "and——"

"I'm covering society in the boxes," retorted Miss Halsey.

"Well," growled Callahan, "of course that ought to be enough! But the *Conservator's* subscribers are old-fashioned creatures, who will expect to hear a little about the opera and the singers."

"Where's Mr. Hazeldean?"

Miss Halsey did not bother to take up the challenge which Callahan's manner threw down. She knew him too well to care for his attempts at bearishness.

"Hazeldean is down with a grippe that threatens to turn into pneumonia. I don't know whom to get."

"Why don't you get some big composer or musician to cover it for you?" asked Miss Halsey, in a flash of inspiration.

"Yellow trick," answered Callahan. "Big, splurgy names—nothing real in the critical line. It won't do for the *Conservator*. We're supposed to be a newspaper with an adequate staff of trained reporters, not an advertising medium for near-celebrities. There must be some one on the staff who knows something about music. We can't all be mere bricklayers. It's rough, not having Hazeldean; he's the best critic in New York. What is it?" The last sentence was shot at the nonchalant office boy, visible behind Miss Halsey's portly, middle-aged form.

"Lady to see you," replied the youth, presenting Callahan with a black-edged card. Callahan took it with signs of that distaste which a city editor comes to feel for feminine callers in mourning.

"What does she want?" he demanded, before he had glanced at the piece of cardboard.

Miss Halsey stood waiting until he should dismiss the intruding female, in order to go on with the discussion of musical possibilities.

"Wouldn't say," stated the boy.

MRS. WARREN LANSING

That was what the black-blocked letters on the card announced. Callahan's face changed, softened, brightened. He rose, brushed the second chair which his sanctum held free of its piled impedimenta, mumbled a word of apology to Miss Halsey, and dashed out into the city room, where, outside a rail designed to keep visitors at bay, Hilda stood waiting. Maud Halsey, perceiving her conference with her editor over, saun-

tered heavily back to her desk, casting a trained, appraising eye upon the lady whom Callahan was leading with so much ceremony toward his office. Being a good-natured soul, and, furthermore, being securely intrenched in the *Conservator's* grace, she felt no jealousy or distrust of the young woman as a probable competitor, and even thought, rather kindly, if patronizingly, that she was a distinguished-looking little person.

"Sometimes those little women are," said Miss Halsey to herself, squaring her own broad shoulders and elevating her head.

"Seven years!" said Callahan, looking at Hilda, after he had ensconced her in the second chair. "Seven years! My, but I *am* glad to see you again! I—I read about Lansing's death. Too bad, too bad! He—he had it in him to do big things. Too bad he should have been cut off in his prime."

Hilda answered nothing. Callahan reddened a little under the healthy brown that his one day a week on the golf links gave him. Of course, he remembered what Warren Lansing had been, what Hilda's life had been, and had bade fair to keep on being, there in Paris. Still, he wished she would make some comfortable, conventional remark indicative of conventional grief. But she did not.

"How's the baby?" Callahan sought a safer topic than her husband's death.

"Clemence has grown a big girl," she told him, smiling now. "She is going to be tall, like her father. She will soon be as tall as I."

"Well, you aren't cut much upon the lines of a giantess."

He smiled across at her. For all the rigid, worn look on her pale face, there was something little-girlish and appealing about her slight figure as she sat in the wooden chair among the billowing papers.

"Do you remember," she began, flushing slightly, "that once—once you told me to come to you if ever I needed a friend?"

His expression changed; old memories, old renunciations, were in his



"Seven years! My, but I am glad to see you again!"

look. He nodded. He did not meet her eyes. "I remember," he told her. "But you never came."

"I've come now."

She knew well enough all that was implied in his answer, as she had known, years ago, all that was implied in his offer; if ever she needed a friend to save her from her husband, to give her life some comfort, some joy. She had been too wise, too strong, to come seeking that friendship. But now there was another friendly service she required.

"Warren left us nothing," she told Callahan, who suppressed the natural inclination to inquire what Warren had done with the large income he had earned. "And I came home to find that my own tiny bit of money was all gone, and most of my Aunt Serena's—the aunt who brought me up, you know," she added.

"I remember," he said. "You used to tell me about her back there in Paris sometimes."

"So I did. I had forgotten. Well, I am out of touch with life here in this country, and Aunt Serena was never in touch with it—at least, in any way that would help us to make our living. So that I came to you for advice. I have known so few people," she apologized for troubling him.

"Is that the only reason you come to me?" he asked, a little roughly. Then he hurried on: "It's a slow job, building up a good musical clientele. It— Then he turned impatiently to the boy, who had reappeared.

"Well?" he asked shortly.

"Mr. Crosby says can you come to the conference now?"

He looked angrily at his watch. It was four o'clock—he was already half an hour late for the daily editorial conference.

"All right. I'll come at once."

He dismissed the boy, and turned to Hilda, who, embarrassed, blushing, had risen for instant flight.

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"Please don't go, Mrs. Lansing," he said. "Or, if you must," as she confusedly intimated that she could not dream of tarrying, "let me know where I can find you this evening. Hello, hello!" he sharply answered the telephone on his desk. "Oh—Mrs. Hazeldean! How's Hazey? Oh, tell him not to worry. We'll pull through somehow. He's to forget it—to forget it. I know, I know—the first opening night in eighteen years, you say, that he's missed? Well, tell him it's all right! I've got the music end of it covered. He's to forget everything, and go to sleep!"

He hung up the receiver, and turned to Hilda.

"By Jupiter!" he exclaimed. "I *have* got it covered! I have! Mrs. Lansing, how often have you heard that popular old chestnut, 'Carmen,' preceded by that other popular chestnut, 'Cavalleria'?"

"Fifteen or twenty times, I suppose," replied Hilda, looking puzzled. "Why?"

"Why? Because a timorous opera management is afraid to open the season with an untried opera, and afraid to offend a prima donna whose chief delight is *Carmen*. Because the Metropolitan Opera management is beginning the season with those old stand-bys to-night. And Hazeldean, our critic, is laid up with grippe. And I don't know whether there's another musical sharp in the office. I think not. We're mainly plumbers and gasfitters in matters of general culture. And I want the performance adequately covered. Will you do it for us?"

"I—I don't know how to write," faltered Hilda.

"I'll write it, if you'll tell me what to say," he retorted joyously. "Will you do it?"

"Of course, I should love to," she replied hesitatingly, "if you really think that I can."

"I am sure that we can, anyway," he told her. "Where shall I call to get you? I can't ask you to dine with me first, for I shall be held up here until late."

She told him the boarding house at which she, with Aunt Serena and Cle-

mence, was staying—a boarding house well and favorably known to the Mrs. Grant who had finally put a happy end to the Reverend Mr. Grant's dangerous flutterings, and therefore sure to be "all right."

"I'll call for you at eight," he said, and then ran up to the editorial conference, where he gained considerable kudos as a farsighted city editor by announcing that he was not in the least at a loss because of Hazeldean's sudden, sharp illness, but was prepared to furnish the readers of the *Conservator* the next morning with the same high order of discriminating musical criticism to which eighteen years of Hazeldean had accustomed them.

CHAPTER VII.

Callahan sat in the tiny drawing-room of Mrs. Lansing's apartment, catching an oblique view, through its windows, of the Hudson and the palisades on the opposite shore. The room was rather charming, with something obviously not of New York in its atmosphere. The long mahogany davenport that almost filled one wall was upholstered in a maroon velvet, to which time had imparted a sort of bloom of its own. The Sheraton card table opposite, with the oval gilt mirror hanging above it, and the coral chessmen ranged upon it, and appearing reflected in its glossy surface and in its glossy, upturned leaf, were of Chelton. Callahan, albeit he had never seen Chelton, felt it. The cashmere shawl, which did its utmost to conceal the atrocities of varnished wood, asbestos sheeting, varicolored tile, and glistening mirror, which goes by the name of fireplace and mantel in the apartment builder's code, was softly rich-colored. The big ginger jar at one corner of the mantelshelf, the brass candlesticks, the sampler on the wall, the century-old handiwork of a long-dead Serena Kirby, "aged ten," were all bits out of an older order of things than was known to this triumph of hasty erection, the apartment house on the side street near Riverside Drive where Hilda, her aunt, and her daughter, had

found refuge. And as such, as links in a long chain of home-making, they appealed particularly to Jim Callahan that day.

Hilda came in to him, hatted and jacketed.

"I'm sorry I kept you waiting," she said. "But it has been an awful morning. Clemence—do you know that Clemence lied to me?"

She stressed the verb with an intense horror. She was pale with strain and agitation.

"No—did she? Wouldn't she be rather an unnatural specimen of the genus child if she didn't lie occasionally?"

Callahan reached for his hat, and together they left the little room, and, passing through a "private hall" of lead-pencil proportions, stood in the outer hall, opposite the elevator shaft.

"Oh, I shouldn't particularly mind lies of the imagination," said Hilda. "Of course, I should mind them somewhat, and should try to overcome the habit in her. But to lie just to escape consequences—that seems different. It was," she added, gravely and portentously, "such an uncommonly *intelligent* lie—that's what is worrying me!"

"Forget it!" advised Callahan. His own usually serene face was somewhat perturbed. "It's as natural to the young as breathing. And there are realer things than that to worry about!"

"What are they?" Hilda caught the note in his voice, and her own was full of swift anxiety. She had not once ceased to be aware, during the months that had passed since she stepped into Hazeldean's shoes, how great the miracle was which had housed, and fed, and clothed her that winter, or by what an insecure tenure she held her means of existence. "Is—is Mr. Hazeldean better? Is he coming back from Asheville?"

"It isn't that," replied Callahan. "But it's just as bad—no—much worse. After all, there would be some pleasure in seeing old Hazey able to be about again. No—but do you realize, my dear lady, that this is the lovely month of April, and that musical events are grow-

ing fewer and farther between each week?"

The substitute critic of the *Conservator* nodded, and sighed.

"Of course, that is true," she admitted.

"You see," Callahan went on carefully, "Hazeldean is a very eminent critic—although every one, even the old man, who's devoted to Hazey, admits that your stuff has been as—as—er—trenchant. It's been bully stuff, Mrs. Lansing, and I've been proud of it, and of you, and of myself for finding you. But the point is that Hazey has been with the *Conservator* so long that he's a fixture; of course, his salary has gone on throughout his illness; of course, it goes on every summer when there's nothing much for him to write about music, unless he happens to go abroad, and send back a few specials. But——"

"I understand," Hilda interrupted. "Of course, I can expect to be paid only for the work I do—and there isn't much work to be done now, and soon there won't be any at all. That's what you mean, isn't it?"

"That's about the size of it," replied Jim uncomfortably. "But let's forget it for the time being. I was a clumsy ass to call it up now, just when you're going to have an outing. How do you feel this morning about golf? Feel the swing coming yet?"

She smiled absently.

"I don't know," she answered. "I'm afraid I shall keep on being a duffer until the end of the golf chapter."

They rode on in silence to the ferry, and crossed the river almost without words. On the other side the trolley whirled them through the suburban places on the river's bank, through the older settlements back from the shore, into the open country. They skimmed across the marshes, turning silvery green after their winter brown. Grass was green, trees were burgeoning. Hilda looked at it all with an unseeing eye. There had been years when the spring had pierced her soul almost unbearably with its white, and green, and purple reminders of the spring when

her life had seemed to come to its fulfillment.

But to-day she noted nothing of all the young beauty. How was she to go on? How continue the work to which she had dedicated her life? How, indeed, was she to supply her little household with bread? The sum for which Aunt Serena had succeeded in renting the Chelton house, big, and roomy, and desirable as it was, only half paid the rent for this little box, this little series of boxes, in which they all lived now. What could she do?

Ah, well, fate had sent a solution of her problem when it had seemed more desperate and difficult even than now; she would try to forget it all, and to enjoy the day. Indeed, it was necessary that she should enjoy it. Were not exercise and enjoyment necessary for the preservation of her health and strength? She compressed her lips in the determination to enjoy.

And so conscientiously she drove off the tee which Callahan built up for her. And even though she could not learn to follow the ball with her eye—even sometimes going to the extreme of closing her eyes as she drove off—still she enjoyed the air, the motion, the sense of warm, kindly companionship. And she came into the club dining room by and by with a hearty appetite for her luncheon. She was troubled to observe that Callahan did not seem so refreshed by his morning as she. She taxed him with weariness, with lack of appetite.

"Oh, I'm all right," replied Jim, rolling a cigarette, and making a bad job of it. They were at coffee now. "But—let's have the coffee in the lounging room, in the fireplace corner. I see it's vacant, and the blaze looks good to me this delusive spring day. And I want to say something to you."

She arose to follow him. Other people lunching in the room turned to watch the short, slim, girlish figure, which seemed more childlike than ever in its black cheviot skirt, with its trim white blouse and its three-cornered hat.

"Looks as though she might be Callahan's daughter until you see her face," commented one of the men. "But, as

soon as you do, you see she's been through the wars, whatever her age."

"Rather striking looking, though, in that white, set way," answered his companion idly. "Callahan himself carries his age well. He must be—let's see—about forty. And he still has that springy step and bearing of a boy."

"Takes good care of himself—Cally. None of your genial lushers. There was a time, though, eight or nine years ago, when he was giving a pretty fair imitation of a youth headed for the alcoholic ward. Old man Rumsen—you know, the proprietor of that obituary sheet known as the *Morning Conservator*—sent him to Paris, of all places! And stranger still, the treatment worked. Cally came home cured."

Meantime Callahan was eyeing the blaze in the fireplace steadily. His clear-cut features were strained a little, his color had ebbed until he was pale under his clear tan. Hilda, unobservant of these signs, sat silent, reflecting upon her own problems. Suddenly she looked across at him.

"We must be very good friends," she said. "We are capable of such comfortable silences together. That's the test of friendship, I think—whether silences are comfortable or uncomfortable."

Jim threw his last collapsing cigarette into the fire, and faced her, with sudden decision in his manner.

"We are always comfortable together," he said positively, "whether we're silent or garrulous. And—and—I want us to be together all the time. Will you marry me, Hilda? You know that I've loved you for eight years."

Hilda shrank back into the depths of the roomy, cushioned wicker chair in which she sat. Her face grew whiter than his, her dark eyes were frightened and troubled.

"Oh, no!" she protested. "You did not—you have not!"

"But I did, and I have," he answered obstinately. "It was all that I could do in Paris to keep from killing that brute, who was neglecting and abusing you. It was all that I could do to keep from making the most passionate love to you,

and snatching you away from him. And I'm not at all sure now that it wouldn't have been better for us all if I had. God! What's the use of crucifying every instinct, every impulse?"

"Oh, no!" she cried, in a sort of terror. "Do not talk like that! It was because he never crucified an instinct or an impulse that he was—what he was; that my life was what it has been! No! There is use in subduing desires."

"Well, let us grant the use in subduing evil desires, then. But not glad, beautiful ones. You haven't answered my question. Will you marry me, Hilda?"

"And let you support me and my daughter—Warren Lansing's daughter—and my Aunt Serena? No, my dear friend! I can see through your goodness. You are worried to think how we shall manage, now that the music season is ending, and so you want to take us all under your kind wing."

"Even if that were so," retorted Calahan doggedly, "I don't see that it's a reason for rejecting the proposition. But as a matter of fact, Hilda, dear, I love you with all my heart. You—you made a man of me eight years ago, and I've cherished your image in the very core of my being ever since."

"I made a man of you?"

"Exactly. I was making an ass and various other sorts of a beast of myself when Lansing stumbled upon me, and brought me around to call. And when I saw you—ah, dearest, don't make my awkward tongue twist itself around fine phrases—when I saw you, and realized what you bore, and how proud, and noble, and clean, and fine you were—why, as I said, the sight made a man of me. At first I wanted to make love to you. Then I wanted to save you from—that scoundrel. But finally I only wanted to be as decent as you were, and never to offend one of your ideals. And so—I came back home. I came back when I first saw that my being there in Paris might be a hindrance to you, instead of a help; that Lansing might distort our relations, our friendship; or that our own hearts might betray us." She flushed scarlet. "Don't be angry,

dear. You are human, and you were suffering almost beyond human endurance."

"I am not angry," said Hilda softly. "I am only remembering—and realizing that it is all true. Is it too late to thank you for going away?"

"Let us not talk of the past, and the time we have wasted—no, lost. But let us talk of the future. You will marry me, Hilda?"

He leaned forward toward her. His gray eyes were brilliant, the healthy color had returned to his face. Hope and pleading, love and the expectation of victory, made him very compelling. But she shook her head.

"No, Jim, I can't," she told him solemnly.

"And why not?" demanded Mr. Calahan, somewhat stiffly. "Don't you care anything about me?"

"A great deal," replied Hilda.

"I don't ask for a spring idyl in affection," he assured her, with eager eyes that belied the measured words. "I'm forty, myself. And I know that you've been through enough to dry every fountain of feeling in you. I don't ask for the raptures and roses of youth, for the kind of feeling you gave Lansing." She shuddered. "But you have an affection for me, a friendship. And—come, Hilda, dear, say yes! We shall be very happy."

She looked at him, glowingly and tremulously.

"You know you are deceiving me, or trying to!" she cried, with soft tempestuousness. "You know that you can feel—all sorts of things—in spite of your great age. You know that you expect—that you would expect—all sorts of happiness from marriage. And that I—ah, that my heart could wake again!"

"Hilda!" he cried, seizing her fingers. "Hilda!" His voice was thick with longing and triumph.

"No, no! I am not going to marry you. I am not going to let you undertake the support of a crew of helpless womenfolk—though that's not the reason. But—don't you realize what I have to do in the world? Don't you realize that I am not free, like another

woman, to take your love, to give you mine? Remember Clemence!"

"I do remember her. I think she needs a father's care as much as any child I have ever seen," he retorted.

"I have just one thing to do in this world," Hilda told him solemnly; "just one use to make of my life. I must undo for Clemence the wrong that I did when I gave her Warren Lansing for a father. All my strength is dedicated to that task."

"You're morbid on the subject, Hilda," Jim told her. "But even at that

the situation were a normal one, as though she inherited only normally good and bad traits. She will need an unshared devotion. I must not have a thought, a desire, an ambition, apart from her! So, maybe, God will let me save her—will let me undo the wrong I have already done her! Oh, the people that think this marrying is a simple matter of a little attraction, a little satisfaction! When all the goodness, and the badness, and the hope, and the despair of the world, the race, are bound up in it!"

Her small, tense face was the zealot's again—no longer the soft, tremulous woman's on the verge of a confession of love. Her dark eyes shone with fanatic fires.

Jim was chilled, rebuffed. He drew back again into the depths of his own corner.

"You are utterly wrong, my dear girl," he told her, but without hope. "It is not by fantastic and deliberated sacrifices that the great things are done, the great race made. It is by accepting the common lot, and making it beautiful and sweet. Believe me, God planted impulses in our hearts that we might follow them, not that we might honor Him by thwarting them."

"For every one else in the world, Jim, that is true," she answered, with swimming eyes. "But not for me and

Clemence—Warren Lansing's daughter."

He looked at her in silence. His eyes were hurt, and bore the look of the lover who finds that he is not first in his beloved's heart. But they bore also the look, half mockery, half tenderness, of one who watches a splendid, futile piece of heroism. There was no longer the light of hope, the light of passion, in them. And after a long glance at her, as she sat staring with brilliant, absorbed gaze into the fire, he said:

"Shall we go round again, or have you had enough for to-day?"



And even though she could not learn to follow the ball with her eye—still she enjoyed the air, the motion, the sense of warm, kindly companionship.

I don't see just where I should be a hindrance in the work. We could give her the very best counteractant for any—selfish—tendencies she may inherit, in just giving her a wholesome, right-thinking home."

His voice was full of pleading. But Hilda shook her head.

"Don't you suppose that if I married you you would be first, that our happiness would be the dearest thing in the world to me?" she asked, and his eyes replied for him. "And—if we had children—would not they divide my devotion with Clemence? It is not as though

She came back from the land of dreams and intense purposes, whither her spirit had momentarily strayed.

"No more to-day, dear friend," she answered.

She leaned toward him, and touched his hand with the cruel kindness of a woman wishing to soften the blow of her refusal. Jim withdrew it decidedly.

"No, thank you!" he said, flushed. "I'm not that kind of a tame cat."

"Do you mean that you won't be friends with me?" she demanded, aggrieved and astounded.

"Of course we'll be friends. But I never observed that you treated me, when I was a friend who hadn't proposed to you, with just that form of friendliness. Since you won't marry me, we'll go back, if you please, to just where we were before I made my plea. And—though I am to be pitied, Hilda, because you don't love me——"

"But I——"

"Nevertheless," pursued Callahan, rudely ignoring the interruption and the words that trembled on her lips, "nevertheless, you must not pity me. Pity isn't what I want from you, and I won't take it! See?" He ended with a laugh.

Her eyes swam in tears as she nodded her head in reply. But his were determinedly gay, and his voice was cheerfully commonplace, bidding her "Forget all about it, and go get her things."

But while she was getting them, and he was awaiting her return, a puzzled frown grew between his brows.

"Poor little soul! I don't see what she is going to do!" he said to himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

What she did do was matter of astonishment to herself no less than to the others of her limited city acquaintance. She had the determination and the ferocious zeal of some animals in the defense of their young, and when she realized the dire need in which her small family stood, she put aside all her fastidiousnesses, all her pride, all her timidity and her ignorance, and she appeared before the city editor of the

Conservator with the request that he allow her to do general reporting during the summer.

Hobson was a good man, easily embarrassed. He made a lengthy and painful affair of imparting the information that the *Conservator* did not take kindly to the thought of female reporters of general news; the women's clubs, of course—but then Miss Halsey had been covering them for twenty-four years, almost ever since there had been women's clubs to cover. Besides, club work was very dull in the summer; all the good ladies who were engaged in raising the fallen, in erecting pleasant, patriotic little tablets in historic spots, in distributing soup, and milk, and leaflets, and good advice—all those good ladies took the summer off, and gave Miss Halsey a well-earned rest. And as for general reporting, it was too bad, of course, but old man Rumsen had never stood for the hen newsgatherer.

And then Hobson nearly dislocated his back, pretending to pick up something from the floor which wasn't there, and endeavoring thus to hide his acute consciousness that he had used slighting and contemptuous words to describe certain of Mrs. Lansing's sisters of the pen. But Hilda was too deeply and despondently aware of the matter of his speech to pay much attention to its form. She thanked him, and went out of his office.

There was nothing to keep her in the "shop" this warm, late-April day. She issued forth on to Park Row, with its innumerable throngs pressing its narrow paves, with the clangor of cars and the rattle of drays making their way to the congested Brooklyn Bridge entrance, with newsboys darting about on the outskirts of the crowds like small, active guerrillas in some sort of a warfare.

In the City Hall Park, nearly opposite the *Conservator's* doors, there was a reminder of spring in fresh green leaves and grass; some reception to foreign potentates was occurring in the beautiful, mellow-tinted old building itself, and flags blew across its marble face.

Hilda paused, indeterminate, looking at the scene, marking its ugliness, its beauty, its intense absorption and hurry. Who stood to watch the spring? Who had time for gazing upon that yearly miracle? Who had time for considering the needs of a woman, inexperienced in money-getting, needy—oh, so desperately needy? No one—except the one man whom she could not now ask for help or advice. She felt the hopelessness of her own problem so keenly that she would have shrunk from burdening Jim Callahan with its solution, even if his avowal of love and her refusal of it had not somehow mysteriously placed him outside the pale of friends.

At the corner, a mob surged around a bulletin board—the bulletin board of the *Daily Trumpeter*, a sheet, which, according to the *Conservator's* published estimate of it, "had done more to degrade legitimate journalism than any other influence in America." It had always represented to Chelton-bred Hilda the last word in journalistic bad taste, with its flamboyant headlines, its series of pictures, its delight in crime, its blatant self-praise. For the women who were employed upon it she had had the mixture of pity and aversion which feminine respectability of all kinds pays to what it esteems not femininely respectable.

But to-day, as she looked at the crowds struggling to read the latest words in regard to a wife murderer's trial, and the claims of the two rival heroes of a forthcoming prize fight, she saw the *Trumpeter* in a new guise.

Only yesterday Maud Halsey had told how Carrie Carlyle, of the crime-specialty corps, had been heard complaining bitterly at a club fight to which she had unwillingly condescended, of the ceaselessness of her labors. And "Lady Montgomery," who "ran" the fashions, and Cleo Recamier, who did the beauty hints—when were their columns scanted because of the season? No, the *Daily Trumpeter* did not lay off its force because the hot weather approached. Who could tell? Perhaps they might even add to it.

She put the notion from her, shrinking with distaste and disgust. She crossed the maelstrom of the middle of the street, and found herself in the comparatively unencumbered park. She passed City Hall, with its flying flags, and had reached the Broadway curb before the shiver of repugnance had quite ceased to chill her.

Then she stood still. What *was* she to do? She had had a newspaper experience of sorts. She had hoped to obtain general reporting from the *Conservator*. Why not go back and try to obtain it from the one sheet in the city which would be likely to have it to bestow?

She loved music, and she had taken pride in her ability to interpret it, and musicians, to the world of the *Conservator's* readers. That had seemed to her a high task. She loathed sensation, vulgarity, crime, noise, blatancy, and she knew well enough that to be enrolled among the *Trumpeter's* forces would be to be immersed in all that she loathed.

And perhaps it was the very fact of her intense repugnance to the work that turned her face slowly back toward Park Row, and sent her feet slowly across the park again. Ever since her one, fatal, irremediable yielding to the belief in joy's rights, in happiness' divinity, she had been more than ever the Puritan, with a grim faith in the righteousness of the unpleasant, the excellence of the utterly painful, the high moral value of the detested.

She waited an hour in the *Trumpeter* office before she achieved speech with any one above the rank of an office boy. And then the keen eyes of Mr. Alpheus Wigglesworth, chancing to light upon her as he made a hurried, graceful trip between his sanctum and the city room, insured for her immediate access to his own presence. And Mr. Alpheus Wigglesworth was the brain of the *Trumpeter*, otherwise known as its editor in chief.

Although Mr. Wigglesworth himself admitted forty-five years, and his enemies, who were legion, and more accurate, added six to his reckoning, he had never lost his ability to feel an immedi-

ate interest in attractive femininity. In his heart he still considered himself dangerous to women, and it was true that he had carried into the beginning of old age the gallant bearing, the readiness of wit, the eagerness to be charmed, which are among the most dangerous attributes of man at any age.

So it came about that it was solely due to the unusual quality of her beauty that Hilda was vouchsafed an interview with him that afternoon.

The interview was not so dreadful as she had feared. Mr. Wigglesworth's accomplishments were many, and the chief of them in his dealing with women was that he never failed to "place" the one with whom he was talking. He had deference, understanding, ease, and courtesy for the lady; he had badinage for the woman who was not a lady; he had wit for the woman of brains, and audacious flattery for the pretty woman. And fifty years of use—for Alpheus Wigglesworth had surely begun his career as a charmer in the cradle—had not impaired any of these manners, or added the fatal touch of "quaintness" which mars the gallantry of many elderly men.

Hilda's timidity vanished before his suavity. Her reserve gave way before his age—he seemed to her quite an old man, in spite of his carefully shaven face and his jaunty bearing.

At the close of the interview, Mr. Wigglesworth knew a great deal about Mrs. Lansing, and her situation in the world. But he had promised to better the latter, by giving her a chance to try general reporting on the *Daily Trumpeter*. He had even succeeded in making her think that there was a certain large, crude, raw magnificence about the way in which the *Trumpeter* handled the news—but that impression vanished before she had again crossed the park on her way home.

Jim Callahan was, of course, furious when he learned what she had done.

"You can't stand it a week!" he told her. "Imagine yourself trying to solve a murder mystery by matching the oil-cloth that incased portions of the remains! Imag—"

"Don't!" shuddered Hilda.

"Don't?" echoed Jim. "You admit that the mere sound of the thing you will have to do sickens you? How on earth do you expect to do the actual thing then?"

Her face set in determined lines.

"I can subdue any repugnance I may have toward any sort of work when I tell myself that I am doing it for Clemence's sake," she told him, in stately phrase.

"It will be a fine, uplifting, refining influence to bring into Clemence's training, will it not?" demanded Callahan.

"No mention of it shall ever cross the threshold," Hilda said earnestly.

"You will carry the atmosphere of it with you!" he warned her.

"I'll disinfect my intellectual garments whenever I come in, as doctors during an epidemic do their clothes," she assured him, half laughing, half annoyed. "Besides, I'm not so sure that the *Trumpeter* is as base as you would like to make out. After all, there are many sorts of people in the world, and the same mental diet is not for all; you must serve strong viands to crude palates, and the serious part of the *Trumpeter's* work is to educate the ignorant in public matters, and to—"

"You've been coached by Wigglesworth!" interrupted Jim. "Oh, we all know how he apologizes to himself for the part he plays in the world—he, a man of birth, and training, and ability, and education. He may have managed to persuade himself that he isn't prostituting his talents—he's been framing his clever excuses so long—but I hardly thought he would succeed in persuading you of the same thing in an hour's talk."

"Oh, Jim, don't scold any more!" she cried, with a sudden wistfulness. "I'm tired—don't scold me!"

Of course Jim yielded. And so began Hilda's long sacrifice of herself on the altar of her child. Every day she put restraint upon her own tastes, her own instincts, and tried conscientiously to look at life from the point of view of the *Trumpeter's* policy. It was a difficult task for the girl reared in Chelton, who had been used to sing anthems in

St. Peter's-by-the-Sea. Yet that she gradually succeeded was in a measure due to the very fact which seemed to militate against success; thoroughness was a watchword for the young among all true Cheltonians, and at St. Peter's there had always been inculcated the doctrine of doing with all one's might whatever one's hand found to do.

That her opportunity to become skilled in the *Trumpeter's* manner was not curtailed in the first days of her futilities and failures, was due to Mr. Wigglesworth. Like Warren Lansing, he liked the flavor of novelty, and the *Trumpeter* office and the other places where he sought the occasional relaxation of feminine society were not rich in women like Hilda, whose delicately chiseled, cameo-like face seemed, sometimes, for a second, the beautiful mask that a spring flower might have put on, and whose manner of reserve and aloofness gave momentary hints of fervent, flame-like, wind-like qualities beneath it.

And by the time that Mr. Wigglesworth had learned that the recesses of her nature were not for his exploration, she had proved herself sufficiently valuable to the *Trumpeter* staff, with her precision, her indefatigability, her quiet, stern ambition, to make it quite worth the *Trumpeter's* while to keep her as a reporter, although the briefer career of a favorite to Mr. Wigglesworth was foregone.

Thus began what was not the unhappiest portion of her life, despite the sacrifice of inclination which it demanded. She was able to provide adequately for her little family. She was able to oversee Clemence's training with a watchful eye. Aunt Serena kept house with all the old Chelton impeccability and thrift, and Hilda's mind was never distracted by domestic problems after the unfortunate habit of less favored women bread earners.

And Jim Callahan continued to be her friend, although there gradually grew upon his kind, clever face the look of a man who no longer expects much of life. That look was the hardest of all her crosses for Hilda to bear. It aroused a passionate pity in her heart,

and a passionate rebellion. Life was too cruel, too hard! It had no right to crucify souls upon its revolving wheel! How dared it deny to Jim Callahan the simple, human good he craved? How dared it take a foolish young girl, such as she had been, and lay upon her such awful burden and such awful responsibility? But for all her anger against fate, and all her pity for her lover, she never wavered in her determination to keep her child her one charge.

And Clemence grew in stature, and in beauty, and in knowledge. Her mind assimilated information easily, and she had an unchildlike contempt for those children who could not learn without great effort. She did not consort much with them, saying frankly that most of their amusements bored her. Dolls she despised, and games of all sorts, but at sports she excelled. In the gymnasium, where Hilda sought to supplement the scanty exercising possibilities of city life, she was always doing daringly and successfully spectacular things. She loved to dazzle her mates.

"She is vain, Jim!" wailed Hilda, when she understood the child's attitude toward life. "She is vain!"

Jim made some conventionally comforting remark. But in his mind he diagnosed Clemence's disposition more seriously. She was vain—it was true. But hers was not a weak vanity, willing to take pains to please, willing to bend herself to circumstances in order to win the plaudits of her little world. It was an arrogant vanity, exacting everything imperiously, and rendering in return exactly what she felt like rendering, and nothing else.

Watching her, sometimes, with her bright hair, her brilliant blue eyes like her father's, the clean-cut modeling of her proud features, so like her mother's in line, so unlike them in color and in expression, he felt a desperate certainty that Hilda's abnegation of her own life, her own right to happiness, would be useless. The child was cold, through and through. And sometimes he wondered how much of that dazzling frigidity which he divined in her was an in-



"Clemence," she demanded sternly, "where did you get that cloak?"

heritance from her father, with his cruelty, his colossal selfishness, and how much from the mother, who had sedulously cultivated coldness, who had put restraint upon all her impulses of longing, of anger, and of grief, in the days when the unborn child lay against her heart.

CHAPTER IX.

There had been a great piece of news down at Bryn Mawr—the trial of a professor for economic heresy, an inter-collegiate game of basket ball, an epidemic of measles, or something which even the staid, old *Conservator* had regarded as warranting the presence of a member of its staff upon the spot.

And young Renwick Halsey, nephew of Maud, who was winning his journalistic spurs on the same sheet that his

aunt had so long adorned, had been selected to "cover" the assignment.

He had come back to New York with a brilliant light in his dark eyes, an absent smile upon his young, well-cut lips. And as soon as he had written his "story," he swallowed a hasty dinner in a near-by restaurant, and made his way swiftly to Hilda's little apartment.

It was one of the places to which his aunt had introduced him, with the intimation that she would prefer to hear of his spending his spare time there than in certain others which might give more promise of amusement. And he and Hilda had become friends of the enduring sort that masculine twenty-four and feminine forty may become, while he and Miss Serena were liege lady and vassal.

To-night he found them both at home.

It was not the same apartment in which Jim Callahan had once waited for Hilda, with hope and misgiving in his heart, but a somewhat ampler one, in which the old davenport—recovered, though still in maroon velvet—did not seem so huge, and where a coal grate made a heart of color and of warmth for the room.

Hilda, still slim and girlish of figure, was stretched out in a long chair before the hearth, but Aunt Serena, whose upright seventy-odd years disdained ease and indolent attitudes as much as her rigid middle age had disdained them, sat bolt upright, knitting in the light of the mellow-shaded lamp.

"Tired?" he asked Hilda, and she nodded.

She had sometimes, in the ten months of her acquaintance with him, broken over the rule of silence she had laid down for herself when she had begun work on the *Trumpeter*; sometimes she spoke to him of her work, and it had seemed to lessen the strain and weariness of it to hear his quick sympathy. And to-night her mute confession of fatigue held a hint of a hard day back of it. But he hurried on, without the usual tribute of attention:

"I've seen the young goddess you claim for a daughter, Mrs. Lansing!"

"You've seen Clemence? But where?" cried Hilda, half starting from her chair.

"At Bryn Mawr. I've been down there. She's—she's—why didn't you ever tell me what she was like?" he ended.

"I'm not at all sure that I know," replied Hilda, smiling, and leaning back again. "Mothers, you know, proverbially don't know what their own children are like; they don't see them with objective eyes."

"She is superb!" declared Renwick Halsey, with enthusiastic conviction. "When is she coming home?"

"I suppose she will be here for the Christmas holidays," stated Hilda unemotionally.

Aunt Serena repressed a snort. Clemence had become distinctly uncertain in her appearances since she had gone

to college; her last summer vacation she had spent abroad with a college mate's party, and she had descended upon the apartment only for a hurried fitting out before her return to college.

"How often will you ask me to dinner while she is here?" demanded Renwick graspingly.

Hilda laughed, and sighed. Aunt Serena snorted again, and then Jim Callahan walked in, and reproved his young subordinate with mock anger for idling away his time in ladies' salons, instead of pursuing the ever-elusive news of the day out in the highways and byways. Renwick answered with laughing spirit, but he took his leave shortly after.

And Aunt Serena, who frankly adored Jim, and frankly thought her niece an unjustifiable imbecile for refusing him, withdrew also.

Callahan, editor in chief, and one of the *Conservator's* stockholders now, had aged more rapidly in the years since Hilda Lansing had rejected him than she had. In spite of the conscientious day of golf each week, his big figure had grown a trifle portly; his dark hair was thickly grizzled, and the brown face was cut by deep, thoughtful, tired lines. Yet there was strength in the face, and Hilda felt a pride in it.

Only once in the twelve years had he failed her. That had been about six years before, when he had spoken ruthlessly about the sacrifice of his life and her own to a selfish, cold-hearted child, whom he declared to be incapable of regeneration by the means which Hilda was employing. Hilda had retorted angrily, and there had been a breach in their friendship.

She did not see him again, and after weeks, she had asked Maud Halsey what had happened to him. Maud had reported that he had not only disappeared from Hilda's ken, but from that of the newspaper world. He had resigned abruptly from the *Conservator*, and Maud had declared that she didn't blame him. Old man Rumsen had had the folly, the treachery, and the general unwisdom—Miss Halsey was emphatic—after Callahan's long years of service, to bring in a new man as editor in chief,

instead of advancing his tried subordinate to the position.

Hilda's heart had bled—he had not told her! She had not been able to comfort him for the slight, the cruelty.

But, as it had happened, old man Rumsen and his importation were at sword's points before a three-month had passed, and at the end of a six-month the only desire which the proprietor of the *Conservator* had was to find Callahan, to make it up with him, and to install him in the place in which he belonged. The reporter who bore the message to the office that "Old Jim" had been met by a relative of his fishing on Santa Catalina Island was made to feel himself an invaluable member of the staff.

Callahan was unearthed, and came back to his old paper, from his rods and his reels, upon his own terms. And the happiest night that Hilda had known in all her New York experience was the one on which he came casually, quietly, into her little drawing-room again, and dropped into his familiar chair beside the grate.

To-night, when young Halsey had gone, she smiled at Jim.

"He seems to have liked Clemence."

"Your daughter is a very beautiful young woman," retorted Jim quietly.

The small, worn, clear-cut face opposite him kindled.

"Jim, that's the kind of a man I hope she will marry—young, and clean, and poor, and idealistic, and able. I think he's quite a wonderful lad."

"He's all of that," agreed Jim heartily. "But I doubt that he'll ever be a rich man, for all his ability. He finds this present order of things unjust; he's likely to try to tackle it, instead of merely making use of it."

"That's what I like so much about him," answered Hilda. "I shouldn't care how poor they were, how straitened, if only they lived for something besides themselves."

"You've leaped ahead, haven't you? They've met just once, I understand?"

"Yes." She sighed a little.

"No wonder they have liked you all

these years on the *Trumpeter*, if your imagination is as serviceable to them as that!" Jim teased her. "Wigglesworth doesn't ask any higher qualification in a reporter than that gift of seeing what the news might become. That's what he did with the Brazilian affair—and thereby netted himself a very handsome little sum."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that he published an absolutely false account of our agreement with Brazil, and almost precipitated a panic on Wall Street thereby; and that during it he acquired for a song stock which became immensely valuable as soon as the report was denied—when he sold it."

"Do you mean he uses the *Trumpeter* to juggle stock—for himself?" asked Hilda, in a horrified tone.

"Do I mean that a bee seeks honey? I do, indeed! Is it possible that you've been working on the *Trumpeter* all these years without ever becoming aware of the means by which Alpheus Wigglesworth's fortune had grown really important? I take back what I said about your reportorial acumen."

"It was my reportorial imagination," she corrected him, smiling. Then she looked grave again.

"Of course, I knew that he was—that they said—"

"That he was not impeccable as a husband? They've been saying that of Alpheus quite truly for a long time. Poor Mrs. Wigglesworth! She's been a gray, withered, little old lady for these twenty-five years; and I declare that Alpheus carries himself as jauntily as though he were really only the fifty-five or six he acknowledges."

"He is remarkable. They were saying on the paper the other day that there had been talk of him for an ambassadorship, and that he was rich enough for it."

"The *Trumpeter* certainly deserves something from the Republicans for the way in which it switched at the last election," agreed Jim. "And Wigglesworth would make a very presentable ambassador as far as address, and real ability, if you come to that, go."

"Poor Mrs. Wigglesworth!" said Hilda irreverently.

After all, her own life had compensations unknown to some women, less fortunate than she, though she could not have admitted the existence of such twenty years before. Perhaps, when all was said and done, things did balance themselves in this world that seemed so unjust to the angered, outraged eyes of youth first confronted with its callous injustice. Mrs. Wigglesworth, poor, drab, little lady, would probably not have changed places with her, Hilda Lansing, for the first years of her married life. But to think of all the slow years of torture, of hurt affection, of wounded dignity, since!

And if, by any blessed chance, that high-minded, gay-spirited boy who had been there that evening should fall in love with Clemence, and should succeed in penetrating to the heart that Hilda had never quite found—might there not be still other happiness yet in store for her—and for Jim?

Like an unwiser, younger woman, Hilda made a blaze of light before her dressing table that night, and closely questioned her mirror. Could it be that she might still seem desirable in Jim's eyes? She scanned her pale, proud, worn features relentlessly. Except for the undimmed fire of her dark eyes, and the unpaled luster of her brown hair, time, and pain, and effort had taken their full toll of her. She looked what she was—she looked middle-aged.

Angrily she darkened the mirror, petulantly she threw herself into her bed. But all her dreams were of peace and joy.

CHAPTER X.

Clemence, straight, tall, graceful, sat in a chair beside her mother's bed. Hilda's previous day had been a wearing one, including, as it did, an interview with a prima donna who was rumored to be about to divorce her husband—in such spicy form the *Trumpeter* liked its musical news; a statement from the morgue keeper as to the persons who had come to identify the body of an unknown, spectacular suicide; a

morning musical covered for the weekly musical paper for which she did additional work; an art show—she was the *Trumpeter's* art critic on the editorial assumption that all art was one, and that a person who could criticize the later Strauss and Debussy must be equally well-equipped to criticize Sargent and Henri. There had also been a newsboys' holiday dinner, and a Salvation Army babies' post-Christmas tree.

Hilda and her daughter had consequently not met during the preceding day.

Clemence watched her mother toying appetitelessly with the bird's portion of food upon her breakfast tray.

"Would you mind telling me," she asked, in her deliberate, musical voice, "why the life you lead appeals to you more than it appeals to you to marry Jim Callahan?"

Hilda flushed. She was not yet accustomed to the unsparing generation of speakers who disregarded reserves, and who smiled superior to the notion of emotional sacrednesses. When she had struggled to rear her daughter in an unwavering regard for truth, this was not what she had expected.

"I really think," pursued Clemence, not waiting her mother's reply, "that it would be a better existence. This"—she pierced Hilda with her sapphire-blue glance—"seems to me a little undignified, if you want my opinion."

"I had not asked for it," answered Hilda, in a voice whose softness robbed the words of some of their reproof.

"He isn't rich, of course," pursued Clemence, unabashed, "but he has enough to take you out of all this." She indicated the bedroom, undeniably tiny and crowded, in spite of the crispness of its muslins and chintzes. "Really, you ought to think it over!"

"Let us discuss your affairs," said Hilda. "Did you have a good time last night at the cotillion?"

"Yes. It was rather amusing. The Dewitts do things very well. Ruth is not a shining intellectual light at college, and not overwhelmingly popular. But my instinct was right when I picked her out as a girl to tie to. They haven't

arrived yet, of course, but they will—that is, if Mr. Dewitt keeps on making money."

"And does the position of little sister to the rich appeal to you?" asked Hilda crushingly, though quietly.

But Clemence laughed—a rounded, full laugh, that denied the rebuke, and mocked lightly at the rebuker.

"Mother, dear, you should have lived in the woods with Thoreau, or milked the cow with the other transcendentalists out at Brook Farm!" she declared. "No, it wouldn't appeal to me for a moment to be a little sister to the rich—but some one must provide me with the platform from which I shall spring into the arena, since you won't. And Ruth Dewitt's family answers for that, as well as another. By the way, your editor came in for supper at two this morning—Mr. Wigglesworth. He's associated in some way with Mr. Dewitt, I believe. An interesting man, isn't he?"

"I never found him so," replied Hilda impatiently.

Surely the girl was talking with the modern form of youthful bravado. Surely she was no more earnest in her declaration of intentions than the small boy who gloriously announces a purpose to embrace a career of crime and slaughter. She rang the bell for the maid to take away her breakfast things, and turned for a moment to her letters. She wished she knew how to talk to Clemence.

After she had broken a seal or two, she looked again toward her beautiful young daughter.

"Did you and young Halsey go to skate in Van Cortlandt yesterday afternoon?"

Clemence's smooth young face remained unmoved as she absently answered: "Yes."

"How was the ice?" Hilda was not so interested in the ice as in her daughter's attitude toward the young man, but she lacked Clemence's unwasteful directness of method.

"Rather badly cut," was Clemence's complete and unsatisfactory response.

"Is Mr. Halsey going to be able to

come in to dinner to-night? Did he say?"

"He isn't coming," said Clemence tersely.

"He thought that he might be able to get some one to take over his assignment for the evening," suggested Hilda. "That fell through, did it?"

"I really don't know. Oh, I suppose I might as well tell you at once. Your astounding young friend asked me to marry him. He has seen me, as I reminded him, exactly six times—three at the college since last fall, and three this holiday week. But he asked me to marry him—at some unspecified date in the future, when he might possibly be earning enough to support me."

"You refused him?"

Hilda spoke weakly. Why, why had the boy been so precipitate? She was sure that he could have kindled Clemence's heart had he but given himself the time.

"Mother, dear, one rank idealist is enough for any family. You are that for ours. I have not entered into competition with you. I declined young Mr. Halsey's flattering offer!"

"You didn't—care for him?"

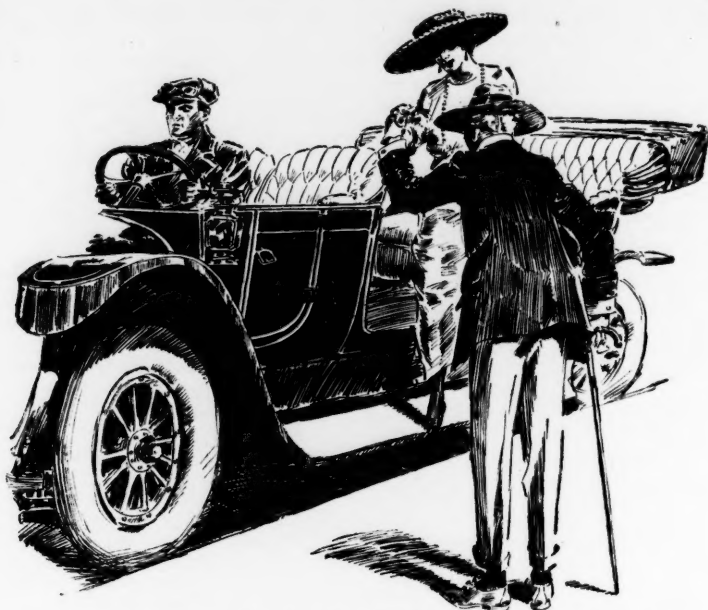
Hilda wished that her voice would not falter so. It was somewhat to her surprise that she observed a soft color flow up the girl's face, dyeing it from throat to brow.

"What a sentimentalist you are!" she cried, laughing, and seeming, with her hard, bright eyes, to defy her mother to notice the telltale crimson. "Why, your little pet is a taking enough youth—I admit that! But if I were married to him I should hate him in two months. Horrors! I can imagine no worse existence than to be tied to a needy enthusiast, an out-at-the-elbows idealist. Not for mine, thank you!"

She had a tone and manner that seemed to give distinction to slang.

"Ah, well, you may grow wiser!" said Hilda. "Now run off. I've got to get down to the office. What are your plans for the day?"

"The Dewitts are going to motor me down to Hempstead this afternoon, and I'm to go to the opera with them to-



A tall man, elderly, distinguished, held out a helping hand to the girl who alighted.

night And I hate to bother you about it, but I've simply got to have a cloak."

The crimson that dyed her face this time was painful. It hurt Clemence's pride to the inmost fiber to be compelled to ask for things. She felt that she should be able to command them.

"It's out of the question, Clemence," said her mother firmly. "You have never been deceived as to our income; you know perfectly that it does not allow you to compete with Ruth Dewitt in clothes. That is one of the disadvantages of being a little sister of the rich—even temporarily. I can't manage the cloak, and I really am not willing to strain a point, and make a sacrifice for it. You see, Clemence, I'm not much in sympathy with the Dewitt attitude toward life."

They looked at each other coldly, the girl's blue eyes as hard as crystal, the woman's dark ones bright with contest. She felt that she was justified in opposing Clemence—she had always felt

completely justified in the opposition that had existed between them from the time the child was able to declare her disposition. And yet, for all the fierceness with which she desired her daughter to be other than she was, there was an unwilling admiration for her.

Clemence's eyes withdrew from the duel of glances first, but not with the effect of defeat; rather with a contemptuous yielding of the struggle to a weaker. But she said, as she turned away:

"You have never really liked me, have you, mother?"

She said it in that curious, hard, unemotional, modern way of hers that Hilda found it so difficult to cope with—without anger, without rancor, without even pain, but only with a detached air of interest in an interesting psychological phenomenon.

"Clemence!" cried Hilda breathlessly.

And then, for the first time in all the years, she spoke of her own sacrifices:

"Have I not given up my life to you? Have I not slaved for you? Have I not given up my happiness for you?"

"Doubtless," replied Clemence calmly, unmoved by the break in her mother's voice, by the strange misery on her face. "You have done it all—you have been a martyr to me. All that I mean is that you have not loved me. Indeed, I sometimes wonder if your great devotion to me is not your queer Puritan way of trying to square yourself for not loving me. Oh, don't think I am reproaching you," she added lightly. "The emotions are beyond control; only actions may be controlled. I suppose I am very like my father, and he must have been a good deal of a rotter."

"Clemence!" cried Hilda again.

Words entirely failed her. Thought failed her. She was only one intense, quivering protest against this ruthless analysis. Then she recovered herself.

"Who," she asked sternly, "has dared to say anything derogatory to you about your father?"

A small, elusive smile played about Clemence's lips.

"Miss Clemence Hawtree visited me at college in October. She told me I was named for her. She said nothing derogatory of my father, as far as she understands derogation. But the praise, the love, of some people is enough. I understood all that she said, and all that she didn't say. And I understood myself much better than I ever had done before. Why, sometimes, looking at you and Aunt Serena, I have been so puzzled about myself that I went wild. But at last I understood. Oh, I don't blame you for not loving me. I only blame the silly books that have always made out that a woman must love the child she happened to bear. You've really been quite a brick, considering. And maybe, some day, I shall wake up to the knowledge that I have something of you in me, too!"

She could not be wistful, she could not be pathetic or appealing. But as she spoke, with her callous, but gallant, air, Hilda had a sudden upwelling of the heart toward her. She saw her suddenly a child, a woman-child, with a

nature at war with her training. She yearned toward her daughter as she had never yearned toward her before in all her life.

"My dear, my dear!" she cried. There were tears in her eyes, tears in her voice.

Clemence looked at her, surprised.

"Oh, don't let's get weepy!" she entreated. "I'll run along now. Don't work too hard to-day!"

She waved her hand gayly, and went off. And Hilda felt that somehow their relation toward each other must be changed by the revelations of that hour. Clemence must learn that she really loved her, she herself must become accustomed to this delicious warmth of heart that flooded her being, to this newborn sense of pity, and understanding, and affection that replaced the dutiful, fierce devotion of all the years since her widowhood. And if Clemence knew what her brief married life had been, surely the girl must feel some returning passion of pity and affection. Oh, life was not done with possibilities yet!

She remembered Jim, only to dismiss him from her thoughts. If she might have complete understanding with Clemence, if they might go on together in love, and comradeship, and mutual forbearance, she would have no need of Jim or any man. Late in her experience though it came, it came at last—the sufficing, selfish joy of motherhood, that lives in a world of its own, needing no man, no lover, no husband.

She sat up that night, waiting for Clemence, and rather marveling at her own courage in doing so. Clemence had appeared to have, since she had gone away to college, a masculine intolerance of all forms of "mothering." But tonight Hilda had hopes of her; surely that speech of the morning, that "at last I understood," had meant something, had been the harbinger of better days than they had ever known.

Clemence came in at last. Far in the street below their aerie Hilda heard the automobile snort to a standstill; she heard the slam of the door of the car. Then the apartment elevator creaked sleepily to their floor, under the guid-

ance of the slumbrous negro lad who ran it. There was a moment's fumbling with the key at the lock—Hilda had put restraint upon her new-born longings, and had not obeyed her impulse to run and open the door for her beautiful daughter—and Clemence entered. Hilda seized a book; she would have the excuse of absorption in a tale if Clemence frowned upon her for sitting up.

But Clemence neither smiled nor frowned. She only remarked indifferently as she entered the sitting room:

"Still up? Then I'm not so very late, after all. We went to Sherry's after the opera, and I had an idea that it was hideously late."

She was unclasping her cloak as she spoke. Hilda's eyes were fixed upon it—a long, enveloping garment of blue and silver, with white fur luxuriously infolding the face of the wearer, and making snowy lines to her feet. In it Clemence looked more like an ice princess of fairy lore than ever. But her mother had no eyes for the artistic beauty of the picture she made.

"Clemence," she demanded sternly, "where did you get that cloak?"

Clemence looked at her with a little air of surprise. It was evident that she had forgotten the colloquy of the morning in so far as it related to wraps, until her mother's fierce question recalled it to her.

"Oh," she answered slowly, but with no effect of timidity or of shame. "Oh, I forgot. We were speaking of cloaks this morning, weren't we? It—"

"Are you borrowing clothes from Ruth Dewitt, as well as a platform from which to launch yourself?" asked Hilda, with angry contempt.

Clemence's eyes flashed icily in reply.

"No," she retorted. "I am not. The cloak is my own—a gift, since you force me to tell you what you won't care to hear, from Miss Clemence Hawtree!"

Still standing, with the disputed opera cloak half falling from her fair young shoulders, she defied Hilda with cold, steely-blue glance, with proud, chiseled young lips.

"Clemence! How—how dare you?" cried Hilda.

She was aware of the utter fatuity, the utter impotence, of her question. She knew that the spirit that confronted hers, the will that disobeyed and derided hers, was as independent of her as though she had not carried the child against her heart, had not borne her with agony of body and soul, had not dedicated her life to her.

"How dared I?" repeated Clemence. "I dare do anything I please. I intend that life shall give me what I want."

Her father spoke in her. Perhaps, as she herself had said that morning, the time would come when she would know that her mother's nature also was in her, but the time was not yet.

"To insult me—to outrage me like this!" cried Hilda.

She could not forbear the weak, accusing speech, vain as she knew it to be.

"Let us understand each other," cried Clemence vigorously, flinging the cloak aside, and sitting down face to face with her mother. "I am a woman grown. I intend to take what I want from the world. I have not the slightest intention of doing anything lawless, because I do not want either jail or social ostracism. But I intend to take what I want. I have brains—I mean to use them. I mean to use people. To-day I met again, by accident, this poor, driveling, ill-bred creature, with her money, and her recollections, and her cheap, vulgar sentimentalism. I used her. I am sorry you object. I hate scenes, and I have not the least wish to make you uncomfortable. But I mean that the world shall give me what I want of it!"

She waited for an answer. Hilda made none for a long time, but sat staring into the hard, cruel, beautiful young face. At last she spoke.

"So said your father once," she said, and now there was no bitterness in her voice, but an awful pity. "And so, God help her, said the poor creature of whom you to-day made use!"

They stared at each other another long second or two. Clemence had paled a little. But her eyes continued defiant. By and by, she shrugged her shoulders, and carried her glittering blue-and-silver cloak to her own room.

CHAPTER XI.

Hilda was somewhat amazed, coming in from the office one day in January, to find the card of Mrs. Alpheus Wigglesworth lying conspicuously upon the hall tray. During all the years that she had been working for the *Trumpeter*, the wife of her chief editor had seemed unaware of her existence. What on earth brought her now? She lifted the card, and studied its English-block announcement of Mrs. Alpheus Wigglesworth's irreproachable residence. Then she noticed that another of Mrs. Wigglesworth's cards lay below the first one, accompanied by those of Mr. Wigglesworth. She sought her factotum.

"Sure the ledly had called about four, or mebbe it might uv been half past," said Maggie. "An' she asked for Mrs. Lansing an' Miss Kirby, an' I tole her ye was never at home till night, an' that Miss Serena had gone to the parruk for an airin', an' then she left the little buunch av cards. An' whin next ye're orderin', ma'am, we're out av silver polish—it was whin the lady rang that I was lookin' for some."

Hilda made an absent-minded promise about the polish, and went into the sitting room, still pondering the question of Mrs. Wigglesworth's belated courtesy. She was going to dine out that evening with the grave, faithful Jim. She smiled as she foretold herself the sinister explanation he would undoubtedly have for the call of the wife of her chief.

"If I were twenty years younger," she said, "I should think that the vain old man was making up to me—though, to be sure, he didn't make up to me when I was twenty years younger, or thereabouts. At least, not so that I was obliged to take note of it."

But Jim, to her surprise, had no half-humorous, wholly derogatory cause to assign for Mrs. Wigglesworth's call. And he had matter more engrossing to himself to discuss.

"Hilda," he said, when they had dismissed the Wigglesworth episode from their minds, and had skimmed through their appetizer and soup, "I wish to

remind you of the number of times I have asked you to marry me."

Hilda blushed; it was a youthful trick which certain glances from Jim could still induce in her.

"Only twice," she replied, and then blushed redder.

She had not meant that "only" to sound regretful, but, to her own ears, it had almost seemed to sound so.

"Only twice, perhaps, in set form," admitted Jim, smiling a little. "Once—how long ago was it?—out at the club, and once just before I went off on my successful fishing trip. But you have known that you had only to drop a glove or a glance any time these endless years—haven't you?"

"One never knows when even the most constant man will change his mind or his heart," said Hilda. "I'm not young or pretty any longer."

"Well, I myself haven't been gaining youthful graces these decades," said Jim. "But you don't seem to me to change."

Hilda smiled at him gratefully.

"But—do you know what may possibly happen to yours truly if the party nominates Bascom, and if he goes in?"

She shook her head. Her eyes were a bit strained now. She had had no rival in Jim's interests all these years except his work and his interest in politics. She had been human enough to resent even those. It frightened her a little now to hear him speak of them.

"They may send me to Berlin. How would you like to go to Berlin, Hilda?"

"Why," stammered Hilda, "I thought there was talk of Mr. Wigglesworth's being our representative at Berlin?"

"You're getting your parties mixed, my dear. It's in case that the plain people's party, which you may have noticed that I and the *Conservator* represent, win out in the next election, that I may get the post. Your friend Wigglesworth and the *Trumpeter* are on the opposite side, you recall. But—will you qualify to go to Berlin with me, in case I go?"

He leaned toward her across the table. His eyes, though they were set in a finely etched crow's-foot, still held

the bright light of affection, appeal; they still had the power to thrill her. Her own half filled with tears.

"Oh, Jim!" she cried. "Why do you tempt me? When my work is not half done? Oh, I know that you may be right in all that you want to say," she hurried on, forestalling him. "I haven't succeeded in defeating in her the traits I wanted to defeat. And maybe your way would have been better. But one has to do as one sees it right to do oneself—you understand? If I had been all-wise, perhaps I should have seen it right to marry you when you first asked me, and to bring my poor little girl up in a home crowded with other interests than just her bringing up. But I had to do what seemed right to me. And—if I should desert her now—it is the very critical moment in her life! She—she has learned about her father, about his nature, his temperament. She says she understands herself for the first time. Well—she is so clever, she is so wise, so much wiser than ever I was!—she must reflect, she must reason, she must come to see that she has a fight on her hands if she wishes to make anything of her life. And she must feel that she has me, and all my love beside her, when she turns to make the fight."

"Then, if I go, I'm to go alone?"

He looked at her sternly, accusingly. All the years he had put restraint upon his love, his desire, spoke in his gaze. She stared back, her eyes swimming in tears, but the fanatic light in them unquenched.

"Oh, my dear!" she cried. "Do you suppose it is easy for me?"

That night she found herself on her knees beside the bed, after the fashion of her girlhood. She was praying, as she had been used to pray in the old days at St. Peter's, years and years before. And she was praying that her daughter might miraculously melt into the arms of young Renwick Halsey, leaving her, the mother, free to follow her own quest for happiness at last.

It was Clemence who enlightened her as to the cause of the Wigglesworth cards. Clemence came up to the city in February for a treatment by a throat

specialist under whose care she and Ruth Dewitt had thoughtfully placed themselves in the Christmas holidays, as affording an occasional avenue to metropolitan gayeties. Clemence, ignoring all the disagreeable features of her last visit at home, was charming to her mother and her great-aunt, in her chilly, bright, casual way.

Hilda spoke of the deluge of Wigglesworth cards.

"Ah, yes," said Clemence. "Mr. Wigglesworth said when I was here that his wife would call. You really ought to have cultivated them long ago; mother. He's a really interesting man. No man in this country is interesting under fifty."

"Where have you had an opportunity to test the quality of his interestingness?" asked Hilda.

She was suddenly afraid. Not for her daughter's heart—it was unthinkable, of course, that the organ could be touched by the charms of an Alpheus Wigglesworth, no matter how wonderfully "preserved," no matter how powerful with the legends of all-conquering fascination clinging to him—but for her daughter's delicacy, her pride, the untouched maidenliness in which Hilda still believed as an attribute of youth.

"He has motored down to college once or twice with the Dewitts," replied Clemence indifferently.

"Was Mrs. Wigglesworth of the party?" asked Hilda.

"No. Mrs. Dewitt says she hates motoring, and goes about in a neat little slow-moving landaulet, with a bottle-green coachman. She hasn't kept up with modern life as he has, apparently. It's a great mistake when a woman doesn't," she added, with profound sapience. "They're a generation apart really."

"It's a great mistake when a man doesn't know when to stop playing the beau, and when to take to gruel and a walking stick," retorted Hilda vigorously.

Clemence merely laughed.

"You'll find him counting in affairs for a good many more years yet," she

said lightly. "While as for her—I rather infer that she long since ceased to count even in the little restricted way in which she may once have done."

"She has had a sad life," declared Hilda.

She flushed uncomfortably. There were topics which she did not care to discuss with her daughter, or, in fact, with any one. Evil, lawlessness, the cold-hearted selfishness of confessed pleasure-seekers, vice and weakness, for these as subjects of conversation she had the fastidious dislike of the lady and the deeper shrinking of the woman who has had her fill of suffering from them all.

Yet she wished to suggest to her daughter that whatever might be Mr. Alpheus Wigglesworth's ability, success, or even charm—granting for the sake of argument that a somewhat shopworn remnant of that quality still clung to him—he was, nevertheless, a man from whom the delicate-minded must turn with distaste.

So she went on, a trifle awkwardly:

"He has not been a good husband to her. She was married to him very young, she has been devoted to him; and from the first, they say, he has not been faithful to her. Forty years of that sort of thing may quench a woman's ambition to keep abreast of her times."

"Oh, I dare say all men are more or less alike," replied Clemence carelessly.

She was obviously uninterested, not from any hatred of the ugliness in the world, but from a profound indifference to what she regarded as the everyday facts of existence. The boredom of the familiar was what she avoided.

Hilda looked at her with troubled eyes.

The next morning Clemence rapped at her mother's door at an early hour. To Hilda's "come in" she entered, tall, lithe, lovely, in the embroidered crape dressing gown which one of her college mates had given her at Christmas, and with her bright hair pinned roughly on the top of her head with a big comb. There was an unwonted air of excitement about her. She held the morning paper in her hand.

"Mother," she cried, with a curious breathlessness, "you know of what—of whom—we were speaking last night? Of poor Mrs. Wigglesworth. Well—you had never returned her call, had you? You didn't really know her? You won't be shocked? The poor woman died last night—she had been ill only two days. It was pneumonia."

Mechanically Hilda put out her hand, while her eyes, wide with horror and pity, searched Clemence's face, with its flush of excitement, its unusual nervous brilliancy. Clemence yielded up the paper. It was neither the *Trumpeter* nor the *Conservator*, but a sheet more frankly sensational even than the one of which Mr. Wigglesworth was the guiding mind. Maggie had sleepily taken it from the dumb-waiter by mistake.

The item was where Clemence's finger indicated. It was a brief statement of the fact that Mrs. Alpheus Wigglesworth, wife of the editor in chief and principal owner of the *Daily Trumpeter*, had succumbed to a sudden, sharp attack of pneumonia the night before, at her rooms in the St. Regis.

"The St. Regis!" cried Hilda, reading no farther, but looking up, puzzled. "Why, they live on Seventieth Street, just off Fifth Avenue."

"Read the rest," commanded Clemence briefly.

Hilda stared, and then obeyed.

Another small paragraph added that Mrs. Wigglesworth had taken the suite at the hotel a week before, having left her husband's house as a preliminary to the divorce proceedings which she had been about to institute against him.

Hilda gasped as she dropped the newspaper.

"Horrible!" she cried, shuddering. "Horrible! If the poor soul was driven to apply for a divorce after all these years, it was not because she wished it; it was because he forced her to do it! Ridiculous! After all that she had borne! No—it was he who wanted it—the beast! And he couldn't even let her die in her own home!"

"Mother!" cried Clemence tensely, protestingly. Hilda raised her eyes in surprise. The girl's face was white and

quivering. "It's dreadful," she exclaimed, "for you to talk like that merely because the poor woman happened to die away from the place where she had lived so long. It was an accident—like any other!"

"What is it to you?" demanded Hilda sharply.

Clemence gave her a long look in response, but finally she dropped her eyes. "Nothing," she answered. "Nothing. What should it be to me?"

She turned, and walked out of the room, leaving her mother full of a new, undefined dread.

And poor Mrs. Alpheus Wigglesworth was finally laid to rest, with a pomp commensurate with her husband's wealth and his importance in the world, and no other paper followed the rude example of the one which had suggested that the dead lady had left her home as a preparatory step toward a divorce; indeed, there gradually grew up the rumor that she had left home in a delirium which was the first indication of the fever that accompanied her fatal illness; and if she had consulted with her lawyers in regard to a separation, that was doubtless also in her delirium.

Mr. Wigglesworth, with his fine, tall, lithe figure, his gray hair, his ruddy complexion, looked as commanding a presence in his mourning as he had always looked in other garb, and accepted the condolences of his acquaintances with the proper air of unostentatious regret. After which his acquaintances went off, and wondered among themselves whether he would do the "right thing" by a lady whose attachment to him was of long standing and wide notoriety. She was not exactly the person to fit in an ambassadorial position, the gossips agreed, if Alpheus should happen to land one; but still—

That summer Hilda frowned upon Clemence's plans for vacations away from home. She craved her daughter's presence, and, besides, a vague fear of danger threatening the girl made her anxious to keep her by her side.

The two great parties had met in convention, and Jim Callahan's candidate, Bascom, had won the hard-fought

nomination. It had been done largely through the *Conservator* and Jim; and Hilda, looking drearily forward, saw Bascom triumphant at the polls, saw him gratefully offering Jim the Berlin post, saw Jim sailing away to new, important interests, to a wider, more brilliant life, and saw herself still tied by her own, unconquerable fanaticism to her petty round of sensation-mongering and of glib art criticism for the *Trumpeter*.

She clung to Clemence fiercely. She "did her duty" by the girl with new intensity. She was intellectually obliged to convince herself that she was greatly justified in the crucifixion of her own desires.

Clemence acquiesced in her mother's plans without much struggle. She went off for week-ends to the summer houses of her friends; she took a brief yachting excursion with the Dewitts. But the greater part of her time she passed at the little flat. She was practically her own mistress there, for Aunt Serena, though firmly protesting that she needed no change, that she could bear the heat as well as any one, and that she resented being driven out of her home, had been bundled off for July and August to the new inn at old Chelton, where Hilda and Clemence were to join her for September.

It was one scorching day late in August when Hilda finally succumbed to the heat. She had "done" a "free-ice" story in the morning, and a fresh-air excursion start at noon; then she had snatched a hasty, unappetizing luncheon at the station, whence the noisy, pathetically happy crowd of youngsters had begun their country journey. There was a thick blanket of humidity between her and the sky, and through it the sun beat down like a burning copper ball upon her eyes and brow. She thought of Chelton with infinite longing. She would write her "story" at home, would send it to the office by a messenger, and would declare herself unequal to any more work that day. Perhaps she would go at once to Chelton—she would talk that possibility over with Clemence. Her eyes burned, her head throbbed, her steps reeled.

She made her way homeward, and, as she approached her door, she was passed by a motor car apparently bound for the same place, for it slowed down before the apartment house. A tall man, elderly, distinguished, sprang agilely to the sidewalk, and held out a helping hand to the girl who alighted. Hilda thought to herself that the girl's pongee suit and broad-brimmed hat of manila straw were like Clemence's. She also observed, with a mind dulled by heat and weariness, that the man looked like her chief, Mr. Wigglesworth.

By the time she reached her door, the girl had entered it, and the man, returning to the car, had driven off again. At the elevator stood the pongee-clad figure. Hilda gasped—why, it was Clemence!

She never remembered afterward with what stupid words she greeted her daughter, or how the girl replied. She only remembered that by and by she was seated in a big, holland-covered chair in her own sitting room, in which the light was dimmed by awnings, and in which the scent of a bunch of white phlox in a bowl seemed smothering to her, and that she was saying to Clemence, in a heavy, weighted voice which she had difficulty in dragging to her lips: "Well, how long has this been going on?"

She remembered afterward how Clemence had turned upon her—haughtily, imperiously—and how she had flashed back her answer: "I will not permit you to speak to me as though I were doing a disgraceful thing."

Then it seemed to her that her mind cleared, that the weight of heat and pain which had bound her brows appeared to be loosened.

"I shall judge of that after your explanation," she heard herself saying, and Clemence's blue eyes pierced her like a pair of steel-blue daggers.

"I might as well tell you the whole thing, and be done with it," said the girl impatiently. "And understand, once for all, that it was only on your account that I have made any secret of the matter at all. Only out of respect for your timorous conventions," she added bitterly.

"Go on," said her mother wearily.

"I am going to be married to Mr. Wigglesworth when his year of mourning has expired," stated Clemence concisely, "or very shortly afterward."

"Are you in love with him?" Hilda heard herself asking. Anything was, of course, possible in this wild, topsyturvy, amazing world.

Clemence flushed crimson.

"I am not a sentimentalist," she said concisely. "You, I believe, married for love," she added brutally. "I have profited by your example—I shall marry for advantage."

"Do you happen to be aware," Hilda went on, feeling strangely detached from the conversation, "that if there were such a thing as honor or decency in that man, he should marry another woman?"

"I prefer that you should not speak to me of persons of that class," replied Clemence, with superb insolence.

And at that it seemed to Hilda that something snapped within her brain, and she found herself crying out hysterically:

"That class! Just heavens, she is a better woman than you! She is less mercenary, less cold! Than you—than you, whom I have struggled so for! Oh, my God!"

She had a second's vision of Clemence's face distorted by something—was it anger, was it fright?—and then she dropped down, down, through an interminable abyss of gray, smothering darkness into unconsciousness.

She came out of the abyss by and by. She was in her bed, in her own room. A nurse sat near the window. She had the feeling of other presences, but she could see no one else.

"What is it?" she asked. She felt a limitless languor.

"A little touch of sunstroke," replied the nurse briskly, approaching, and changing the ice bags at her head. "Don't talk."

"Who is here besides you?" Hilda disobeyed her.

Jim Callahan moved from beyond the head of the bed into her sight.

"Clemence sent for me as soon as she had called the doctor," he said.

His big hand clasped Hilda's small one, lying limp upon the coverlid. A reviving wave of strength flowed through her at the touch. The nurse discreetly withdrew.

"Don't go away," said Hilda, weakly and drowsily.

She closed her eyes, and drifted off into a brief slumber. When she opened them again, Jim still stood there, awkwardly holding his hand upon hers.

"If you should go away where I couldn't reach you," she whispered, smiling, "I should just let go and die."

"Nonsense!" Jim vigorously combated the idea. "But then I've no intention of testing you. Wherever I go after this, you're going, too—aren't you, my dear?"

She smiled, and pressed his fingers acquiescently. And then the slow, unwilling tears welled beneath her lids.

"How I have failed, Jim!" she whispered weakly. "How I have failed! See how I kept you waiting, and made our lives barren—all for a failure! What a waste, what a waste!"

"Hush, dear!" Jim answered gravely. "There is no waste. Some day she will find herself your child, as well as Lansing's. Some day you and all the years of your sacrifice will begin to bear fruit in her. And as for us"—he smiled down whimsically upon her—"I have a hunch that we are going to make up for more lost happiness than we ever lost."

Hilda had been married two months when the presidential election came in November. She was as tensely excited as if her husband had been running for office himself, but it was not the thought of the reward that might possibly accrue to him that kept her eager; she wasn't particularly interested in the Berlin embassy; she was only absorbed, heart and soul, in the desire that her husband's work might not be vain. So much of his life had been rendered futile by her own determination that Hilda, in her remorse, in a curious, half-maternal desire that fate should finally make amends to him, was in great danger of

"spoiling" her Jim, despite his fifty years of discipline.

Clemence, in view of her approaching marriage, had left college, and was living with her mother and stepfather. The spectacle these two middle-aged persons presented of absorbed and happy devotion was one which she viewed with a mixture of wistfulness and longing in the midst of her impatience.

On the night when Bascom was finally declared to be the man whom his fellow citizens wanted for their president, she and Hilda, with a crowd of other women and of men, were waiting returns in the Reformers' Club. A wry little smile twisted Clemence's lips at the final announcement.

"There goes Berlin—for me!" she said. "Tremaine had definitely promised it to—Mr. Wigglesworth"—she never could utter the intimate "Alpheus" to her mother—"if he went in! Heigh-ho! Would you mind getting out of this crowd of lunatics and going home?" she added wearily.

"Of course we'll go," said Hilda pityingly.

As they leaned back among their rugs and furs, the passing lights shone now and then on Clemence's face, sharp, pale, old, for all its beauty. Hilda watched it silently, praying for the right word to be given her to speak.

But Clemence forestalled her.

"If only I had seen what I see now before it was too late!" she said. "If only I had seen what life may be with simple love, and devotion, and trust, instead of seeing it as a flowerless, grim waste without money! Ah, mother! If only you had married Jim Callahan earlier!"

"Clemence!" cried her mother, quivering with protest.

"Oh, I know it isn't fair to speak like that—it's never fair to speak the truth, apparently," she added bitterly.

"Clemence, if you feel as you seem to feel, don't marry him. Don't marry him! There is happiness in store for you, there is honor, usefulness, joy! Don't marry him!"

Clemence turned, and regarded her mother with a bitter humor.

"The dreadful thing is that I can't break with him, now that he's defeated," she said deliberately. "It's a most amazing muddle. I live for twenty years declaring that I will have what I want, that I will not lead the skimmed, starved life of my mother, the ugly, laborious life of my mother! And I take the first avenue of escape from the possibility of such a life; I take an avenue leading to wealth, to interests, to brilliancy, where all my gifts will have full chance. And two months of seeing the glorification of the common life by the thing that I have denied and despised, but have never seen—by the love of a man and a woman for each other—have made me miserable, discontented with my bargain, discouraged with my choice. And yet—oh, mother, mother, this is the worst of it! I am your child, after all, and the child of all your forbears; and I hate them for it! For now that the thing I have set out to do begins to look ugly and hard, something in me says that I have to keep on with it. Oh, I have come into my wretched Puritan inheritance at last! Reason fails me, and I shall always go ahead with whatever is hard, as you have always done."

They drew up before the house, and alighted stumblingly. Never had Clemence opened her heart like this before to her mother. And Hilda had no words with which to respond. Forces too deep for words were unloosed—ancient inheritances, warring impulses, the speechless influences of day-by-day gentleness, courtesies, love. Once, for her daughter's sake, she had been able to mark a rigid course for herself, and

rigidly to follow it. Here it had led them. Who was she, with that record of failure, of presumptuous mistake, behind her, to mark a course for another now? She could only pray, dumbly, deep in her heart; she could only feel an outwelling love for the girl such as she had never felt before in her life.

Her husband awaited them, grave, preoccupied with a trouble that banished the night's victory and all its possibilities from his mind.

"Will you run away, Clemence?" he said, with a tenderness, a pity, that had never been in his voice before. "I must see your mother alone. But—she will be with you in a few minutes."

He led her gently to the door of the library. He closed it after her, and came back to his wife.

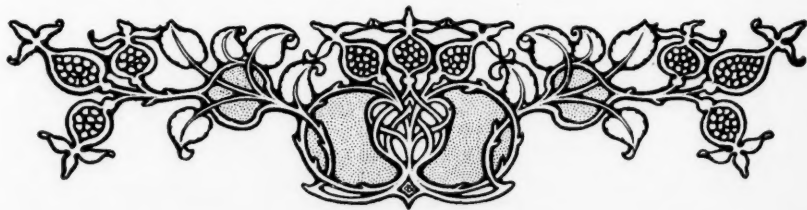
"You will have to break it to her. It is horrible," he said. "But—you see he was really an old man; he had lived hard. The excitement and hard work of the campaign—the disappointment to-night—a scene with that woman, who had just learned of Clemence—it has all been too much——"

"Jim!" cried Hilda. "What is it? What is it?"

He handed her a damp column of newspaper proof. She looked at it eagerly; ran through it, her face working with emotion.

"Oh!" she cried at the end. "Thank Heaven—thank God! Ah, the poor, broken creature—God forgive me my selfishness! But my daughter—my little girl! At last we have a chance to save her, Jim—you and I!"

Her face was wet with tears as she went out of the library, and turned toward her daughter's room.



ON ROLLO'S VOICE

By Charles Battell Loomis

ARE you going to let Rollo grow up with that voice? All right, go ahead. He's your child, and I suppose you have a right to let him emulate a rusty foghorn, but it does seem a pity that he should outnasal a stage Yankee.

It isn't *necessary* for him to talk that way, and it does sound so unpleasant to people with sensitive ears.

Because you have a rasping voice is no reason why your boy should have one, too. Sandpaper it whenever you get a chance. Let him talk into a good receiving phonograph, and then make him listen to his voice, and he'll want to have it changed himself.

I saw a man in Europe one summer who would have passed for an American in a fog even if one had been blindfolded. Honestly. Such a grating, harsh, metallic, raucous, ear-splitting, motor-horn sort of voice you seldom hear. They can't grow those voices in Europe, and so wherever he went people turned, and laughed, and said "American!"

He was a good-natured man, and he didn't want to give his countrymen a bad name, but that was what he did wherever he went. And traveling with him was the daintiest little chap you'd be likely to see in a month of Fourth of Julys. About four years old, with soft little eyes, and an ingratiating smile, and baby ways that betokened much coddling. And—his father's voice in lusty miniature. Nasal twang, middle Western "r," reedy timbre.

If by performing a surgical operation upon his throat I could have given him a voice as velvety as his face, or as soft as his eyes, I would have done it, but he was not my child. I am not an adept in the use of surgical instruments, and so—I let him alone.

"Parr, come'n take a walk daown by the riverrr."

It would shrivel an ordinary eardrum to hear the intonation, but instead of "Parr's" saying: "Gently, my boy. No need to raise your voice. We're all in Europe together," he'd answer in a thousandfold echo of the boy's tone: "All right, son, I'll be 'long in a minute. Waitin' for your marrr." And foreigners would look on in open-eyed wonderment that such disagreeable sounds could come from two such good-looking mouths.

Study tone production with your children.

You may make Carusos or Tetrazzinis of them.



J
HODGE
PODGE
BY
MARION SHORT

Author of "The Famous Gochran Children," "Company for Dinner," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY G. C. PUGSLEY

THAT was actually his name. His mother was a Miss Hodge before her marriage to Podge, which explains it. They called him John for his father, and Hodge for his mother, but as everybody insisted on addressing him by his middle name from the beginning, the blend that finally appeared when he attained unto the age of visiting cards was J. Hodge Podge, which some thought improved the name, and some didn't.

J. Hodge Podge, then, had managed to survive his chaotic appellation through twenty-eight years of a singularly methodical and well-ordered life. For the last ten of these years he had reported for service every day at the suburban offices of the United Aqueduct Gas Company. He was employed there as a bookkeeper.

Miss Pond was employed there, too. She worked as stenographer and typewriter in the little fenced-off space, right next to Podge's fenced-off space, near the big side windows in the main office of the United Aqueduct Gas Company.

It was past closing time on this particular afternoon, and all the employees, male and female, had gone their several ways rejoicing, except Podge and Miss Pond.

Podge did not feel like going his way, and particularly he did not feel like re-

joicing. For be it known that Miss Pond had resigned her position, and was at this moment busily occupied with making preparations for her final departure. And Podge was madly, though secretly, in love with her.

As she searched for the dozenth time through the cubby-holes and drawers of her own little desk, Podge's surreptitious eyes followed her sadly and hungrily.

Podge was big, and muscular, and well-knit, with a big, dark, curly head. Which is probably why he admired so much the utter oppositeness of Miss Pond. Miss Pond resembled nothing so much as a blond, delicately constructed bisque doll out of a Christmas window.

Podge noted the glint of the sunset on the doll-like crinkles of her hair; noted how the blue of her dress brought out the doll-blue of her eyes; noted her pretty feminine movements as she placed in a long-leashed hand bag a tiny mirror, an address book, somebody or other's letters, a silken-covered powder puff, and similar dainty belongings; and as she closed and locked her desk he felt suddenly swamped in a sick feeling of utter, ir retrievable loss. After to-day she would never be his sunset princess any more!

Miss Pond arose, tripped doll-like

over to the closet where her coat was hanging, and, as she reached for it, turned, and spoke back to Podge:

"Did you remember that I am leaving to-day, Mr. Podge?"

Did he remember? Podge nodded. At the moment he could not trust himself to speak.

Miss Pond pinned on an absurd little hat, which made her look more doll-like than ever. Then she came toward him.

"Mr. Podge, I want to thank you for something before I go. May I?"

"Wh-why, certainly!" stammered the surprised Podge. "Only there doesn't happen to be anything to thank me for."

"Oh, but there is!"

A decided bob of the blue-crowned head.

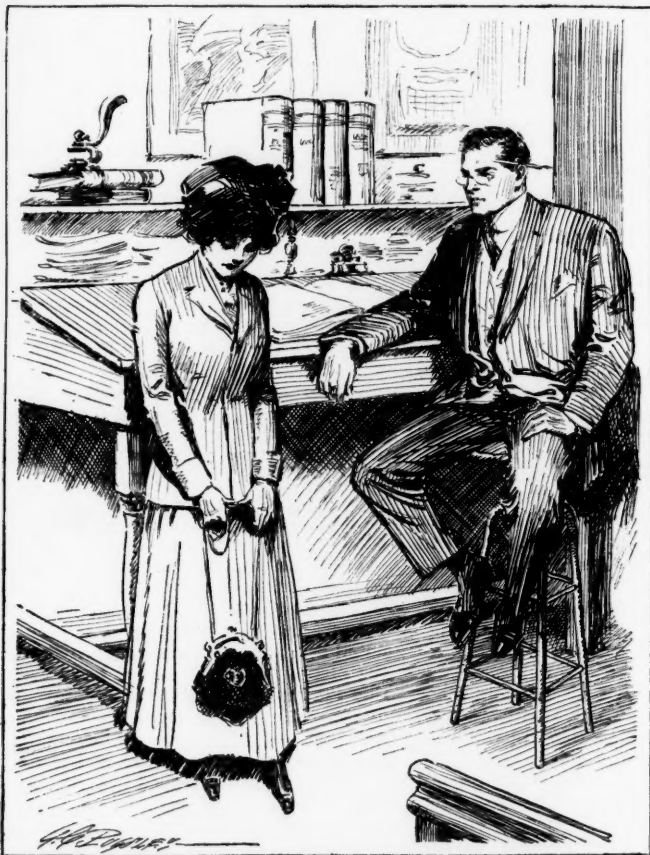
"I want to thank you for——"

She paused—suddenly at sea. Then gave an odd little laugh.

"Well, to thank you for—for just being yourself, I guess. I don't seem to know how to say it any other way. But what I mean is that—well, as I've often

told Aunt Hattie—the aunt I live with, you know—you've been the only thing with a heart-beat in all this crowded office. The rest of it is just a big, sickening, soulless machine! Of course, in business one shouldn't look for sentiment of any kind, but a woman does always—especially for kindness and appreciation. The only kindness and appreciation I've known since I've been here have come from you. That's why I want to thank you."

Podge blushed, and protested:



Miss Pond's eyes carefully sought the patent-leather toe of her number-two shoe.

"Why, Miss Pond, I don't deserve a spark of gratitude from you. Sometimes when you've worked after hours to help me out, I've tried to thank you, perhaps, but that was only just."

His voice sank. A deep delight dawned in his steel-gray eyes.

"I—I didn't suppose you'd even notice, Miss Pond, let alone remember anything I'd ever said to you."

Miss Pond came through a little gate in the dividing fence, and stood at the corner of his desk.

"But I did, you see, both notice and remember."

Her ungloved hand dropped on a page of his ledger. Podge thought he should remember seeing it there like that—always.

"Mr. Podge," she went on thoughtfully, "may I suggest something to you frankly before I go?"

Podge put his long-dried pen aside, and closed the ledger at which he had pretended to be working.

"Suggest anything and everything you like, Miss Pond. I'll double entry every word of it in my brain, and lock it there for keeps."

"Well, excuse me for saying it, Mr. Podge, but you're not a happy man—I know you're not! I don't believe in unhappiness if there's a way out. Why don't you follow my example, and get married, Mr. Podge?"

Before he was aware, a swift-mounting fire in Podge's eyes had answered her. She lowered her pretty head in sudden consternation. She had long suspected—what woman does not in such a case?—that Podge was hopelessly in love with her. But it had been furthest from her thought to tempt him to betray himself, even by a glance. Especially as she was to marry another man before the month was out. To hide her confusion she began putting into words half-formed thoughts she had never meant to reveal, thoughts she had privately indulged in about Podge.

"Mr. Podge, in lots of crowded offices there are men who are just as much hermits as if they lived in a cave in the woods, men who lead just such

lonely, futile lives, men who never make an attempt to climb out of the rut they're in."

"And am I—one of those men?" asked Podge quietly.

"Aren't you?" demanded Miss Pond's cherry lips. "Aren't you, Mr. Podge? I've only worked here for a year, and marriage will release me. You've stayed right on for ten years, they tell me. Ten years of keeping books in a ghastly gas office! Oh, that sounds like a dreadful pun, but I did not mean it so. But still——"

She clasped her hands appealingly.

"Oh, Mr. Podge, why don't you ask yourself what you'd like to be, and do, and have in this world, and then go about making your dreams come true?" One clenched hand smote determinedly the soft, pink palm of the other. "That's what I believe in—making one's dreams come true! Whether it's a home, or business, or marriage—making one's dreams come true!"

Then she shook her head doubtfully as she looked at Podge's shoulders, stooped with their ten years' sojourn in a rut. "That is—if one has any dreams," she added, with a sigh.

"Oh, I've had my dreams, Miss Pond," came Podge's quiet answer, "and they've not all been connected with fusty rows of figures, either." And he waved a slighting hand toward the huge ledger on his desk. "I've had very clear dreams of the business I'd like to engage in, the home I'd like to build, the woman I'd like to have married."

Miss Pond's eyes carefully sought the patent-leather toe of her number-two shoe.

"But you see, Miss Pond," he resumed, after a slight pause, in which he looked also toward the tiny point of patent leather, "there's a plain old word that sometimes stands squarely in the way of a man's making his dreams come true—the word duty. I've two younger sisters in school in California—the school where I put them when mother was taken away. Dear little girls, they are! I happen to be their sole support. That's why I can't afford to leave the job I have to look for a better one. I



"Yes, she's home," answered the boy, "but I don't think she'll see you."

can't afford to let their income stop, even for a day. That's why I've got to make the best of the rut I'm in for the present. That's why I'm not free to make my dreams come true."

For a few moments after he had concluded Miss Pond seemed bereft of speech. She stared at him as with new eyes, blushed, then paled, then blushed again.

"Why, Mr. Podge," she exclaimed at last, "to think I've worked at the next desk to yours a whole year, and misunderstood you so completely! And I was perfectly certain in my blind conceit that I read you like a book! I never dreamed you had a responsibility in the world—when I might have known that there were sisters—or some one. Oh, how superficial I've been! Simply judging you from the surface of things, instead of going down deep. You've been noble, noble to give up your dreams and stay on so uncomplainingly for their sakes—and I thought it simple sluggishness. How could I have thought so for a moment? Forgive me for trying to jog you out of the rut, won't you? I didn't understand! And I did it because I thought it might help you."

She put a vibrant little hand on Podge's sleeve. Poor Podge clenched his fists hard to keep from taking her in his arms then and there. But he only stepped back and smiled down at her—his slow, sweet smile that came seldom, but always meant something when it came.

"It was bully of you to wish to see me out of the rut—that's what I'll remember. And I hope life will be for you just what your dreams have pictured, Miss Pond." He laughed to conceal the queer shake he found creeping into his deep voice as she extended her hand in farewell. "And I hope you're done with ruts forever!"

Two weeks later the United Aqueduct Gas Company lost another employee—Mr. J. Hodge Podge. Podge always did the right thing as far as he saw it, and his resignation was in a full ten days before he added up his final row of figures. It took the company that long to find a thoroughly competent man to take his place.

Once outside the door, and with the knowledge that, incredible as it seemed, he need never open it again in the name

of duty, Podge's thoughts flew, like birds escaped from a cage, straight in the direction of Miss Pond. He longed to tell her that he, too, had climbed out of the rut forever, that he, too, was at last at liberty—though most miraculously and unexpectedly—to take the stuff that dreams are made of, and weave them into practical, visible results.

For J. Hodge Podge's father, who had years before deserted his young family in California and fled to Australia, had finally done the only creditable and becoming thing in his entire career, which was to take a final leave of it, thus relinquishing a substantial fortune in tin mines to his son and daughters in America.

The news of his inheritance reached J. Hodge Podge the very day that the new girl came into the fenced-off space next his own, to desecrate with her plebeian presence his memories of the princess who had gone.

Miss Pond lived in a modest suburban apartment house with a widowed aunt and two young nephews. One of the boys was spinning tops on the sidewalk as Podge came along. Podge suddenly remembered that it was only two days until Miss Pond would be Miss Pond no more. But thank God there was yet time for one more glimpse of her unmarried, independent, doll-like, bewitching self!

"Yes, she's home," answered the boy, in reply to his inquiry, "but I don't think she'll see you." He hastily amended his statement as Podge flushed scarlet, and

6

started back. "That is—I mean—she doesn't want to see any one. She's told me so, over and over again."

"Of course she's—naturally—busy with her preparations," said Podge. "I understand. And I shan't detain her but for a few moments. But please tell her that Mr. J. Hodge Podge is here from the office—with some news he



"Can't I go and punch that fellow's head for him?" he asked, in perfect sincerity.

thinks might interest her. No, you needn't say it might interest her—just say—with some news."

The boy turned back, with his hand on the doorknob.

"I've seen you lots of times," he volunteered, with a friendly grin—boys always liked Podge instinctively—"for I used to carry down Cousin Flora's rubbers and umbrella to the gas office when the day turned out rainy. I'll tell her you're here."

Podge waited on the steps a full five minutes for the boy to reappear. And while he waited he told himself that it would probably be the best thing in the world for his ultimate peace of mind if Miss Pond refused to see him. But somehow he could not make ultimate peace of mind seem at all a desirable thing at that moment. He preferred the exquisite torture of her immediate presence, even if he paid afterward—paid bitterly.

The boy bounced out in front of him without warning.

"One flight up," he said, to the enormous relief of Podge. "Front door—that's the parlor—walk right in. And she'll see you in a few minutes if you feel like waiting."

Between the two windows of the little parlor hung a framed photograph of Miss Pond. Podge walked straight up to it. He was still staring at it adoringly when Miss Pond came in.

"Well, Mr. Podge?"

Podge turned with a smile. But the smile vanished instantly at sight of her, and a look of apprehension replaced it.

"Why, Miss Pond—you are ill! Why didn't the little chap tell me? I'm so sorry I've intruded like this. I——"

Miss Pond seated herself on the piano stool, and waved Podge to an armchair. He dropped down obediently, but sat forward on its extreme edge, eying her apprehensively.

"You needn't be sorry," said Miss Pond, smiling in a curious, defiant little way. "I'm not ill. I'm as well as I ever was in my life."

"Then what's the matter? What has happened?" questioned Podge.

Miss Pond held up her head still more defiantly at Podge's queries, and continued to smile. Podge wished she wouldn't. It seemed such a mockery of the spontaneous, sunshiny, dimpled article he had always known. And how pale she was! Like a poor, mistreated wax doll, with all the pretty color washed out of its cheeks!

"Won't you tell me what's the trouble?"

Podge's voice was humble, but imploring.

Miss Pond took a sheet of music from the rack, and began rolling and unrolling it.

"I'll answer your question by asking you another," she replied, making a vain attempt to appear light-hearted. "What ever brought you here during business hours? You, the never-failing, always-dutiful Mr. Podge?"

"Don't try to smile," begged Podge, his voice distressful. "And don't ask questions about me. I don't matter one way or the other, and you do. You're bothered horribly over something. I wish you'd tell me what it is, and let me do what I can to help you."

Miss Pond made a determined effort to retain her fixed smile, but the sympathy in Podge's honest voice was too much for her. Her face suddenly crinkled into lines of grief. She arose, covered her eyes with a shaking hand, and bowed her forehead against the wall.

"Shut—the—door!" she commanded Podge spasmodically, and he flew to do her bidding.

When she was finally able to control her sobs, she invited Podge to a seat beside her on the sofa.

"Mr. Podge," she said, with a short, curious laugh, as she dabbed at her eyes with a tiny and very damp handkerchief, "do you think they'll take me back in the office? I need a job! I'm ready to drop back into the rut. You see—I'm not to be married, after all."

"You're not to be married?" gasped Podge. "You mean it's—postponed?"

"I mean it's off—off forever!" She laughed again. "Oh, I suppose if I were like some girls I'd tell you it was all my doings—that I had changed my mind and thrown him over. But I was always painfully truthful, and I can't lie even now, when it's such a temptation to do so. For I am proud, Mr. Podge, and the truth—hurts. It was he who went back on me. That last day you saw me—I reached home, and found the note asking for his release. He suddenly discovered that he cared more for a former sweetheart than he did for me. So he has put me on the sister list. He says he will always love

me as a sister. Isn't that sweet of him?"

She laughed again, then compressed her flowerlike lips into a hard little line, unpleasant to see. She shrugged her shoulders, snapped her fingers, as if to dismiss the entire subject, and settled back against a huge green cushion.

"Do you think they'll take me back at the office?" she inquired again listlessly.

Podge turned pale, but his gray eyes held wicked lightnings in them.

"Can't I go and punch that fellow's head for him?" he asked, in perfect sincerity. "I—y—o—u haven't any big brother to look out for you, you know, so it's up to somebody. I'd like to do it for you, if you'll just tell me where he lives. I—I'd like to do it on my own account."

Miss Pond laughed again, very genuinely this time.

"Oh, Mr. Podge, that wouldn't help matters any! Not even my pride. But I thank you for it, just the same. I've just got to brace up and stand it. Only—don't tell the folks the truth about me at the office—for a while. I don't want them pitying me."

"I'd like to see them try it if I was around," said Podge hotly, then suddenly remembered that he had resigned, and wouldn't be around.

"Strange that you're going back," he exclaimed, "just as I'm leaving!"

"Oh, you poor man! You don't mean that after all your years of faithful grind, they've gone and let you out?"

"No, Miss Pond; I let myself out.



Miss Pond came and leaned against the door, and so forced him to look at her in spite of himself.

I've come into a little money unexpectedly. That's what I called to tell you, remembering your kind interest in me when we had that last talk together down in the office. Some of my dreams are going to come true if it's in my power to make them."

Miss Pond enthusiastically took his big hand in both of her small ones.

"Oh, isn't that just fine! I'm so glad for you! You're just the kind of a fellow that deserves good luck, and I suppose that's just why I was so certain you'd never have it. So you're the one who's going to live the larger life—not me! Doesn't that seem strange, Podge, when I saw it all so clearly the other

way? I thought if I passed those blank old front windows of the gas office ten years from now I'd still see you there at that old desk of yours. But, instead—ten years from now you may see me there as you pass by."

"May I ask you a square question?" inquired Podge abruptly.

Miss Pond nodded as she pinned back a disheveled blond lock.

"Was it your sweetheart you hated to give up most, or your dream of a home?"

"My dream of a home, and the bigger, freer life it meant for me," she answered instantly. "Yes, that's what I've grieved about most—that home I've pictured, crumbled into dust! Though I was mighty fond of the man, and glad to marry him, you understand, even if he wasn't quite my ideal. But I'm only truthful when I say that the home came first."

Podge's reply amazed her:

"I'm glad to hear that, for in that case we can still arrange to have the best part of your dream come true. You don't need to go back to the office. You can have your home, and enjoy it. I've got more money than I'll ever need—"

"Mr. Podge!" interrupted Miss Pond chokingly, as the quick tears sprang to her eyes. "How unspeakably kind of you to wish to do this for me! Though of course it's utterly impossible for me to consider it for a minute. But I know that great big heart of yours, and—"

"Why is it impossible?" demanded Podge anxiously. "Please don't say that, Miss Pond, without thinking it over. It means—everything to me!"

"But a woman can't take things from a man who's no relation," explained Miss Pond, with a patient little laugh. "You ought to know that by this time."

"I do know it," said Podge. "That's why I'm trying to ask you to marry me, though I'm making such a confounded botch of it! I mean, of course—I'd expect you to put the home first—and me second—or third—or tenth, or anywhere—but oh, Miss Pond, marry me, and let me give you that home you've dreamed of."

She arose, and walked away.

"Oh, Mr. Podge! Oh, no, I couldn't!"

"No, I suppose you couldn't," he said practically, and with an attempt at cheerfulness. "I'm only fusty old Podge, and I needn't have hoped that just because I love you better than my life— No, of course you couldn't!"

He fumbled at his hat, and prepared to take his leave.

"Wait!" cried Miss Pond faintly, but imperatively, as he started for the door.

Podge paused, but stared blankly at the door, striving for self-control.

Miss Pond came and leaned against the door, and so forced him to look at her in spite of himself.

"I—I thought you were just asking me out of pity," she said tremulously, "but now I know—that you weren't. I'm a jilted girl—I've told you just how lightly another man thinks of me—that usually cheapens a woman in a man's eyes, whether she deserved the jilting or not. But you still think of me just the same as you did before it happened!"

She gave a sharp sob, even while she smiled at him.

"Podge, I'm not good enough for you. You deserve a woman that loves you with her whole heart, and I don't. Oh, I respect you, like you, honor you, and I wish from my very soul I could say I loved you, but I don't. And you wouldn't want to take me like that, Podge, you know you wouldn't!"

"Yes, but I would," cried Podge tumultuously. "I'd run my chances on the love coming in time. Oh, you dearest little doll that ever snuggled deep in the heart of a man—"

He held out his arms, and she walked straight into them. Podge kissed her reverently on the lips.

"To think my sweetest dream should come true first!" he whispered.

Miss Pond struggled away from him, and looked at him in her odd, practical little way.

"Your kiss was unexpectedly—pleasant—to me, Podge," she said analytically. "That's rather a hopeful sign—about the love coming in time. Don't you think so?"

Podge thought so, and said so.



The two men looked across me at each other as though they had been enemies from the cradle.

Adventures in Bohemia

By Edith Summers Updegraff

Author of "Miss Smallpiece and the Occult," "The He Co-Ed," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

HE'S just the dandiest sort of chap," gasped Madge, throwing open the door of the flat after our five-flight climb; "you'll probably meet him to-night or to-morrow. Sniff! Bean soup! She's broke!"

I got a thrill, a real, tingly, delicious thrill, as Madge slapped back the battered tin cover on the old, smoked-up saucepan. "Sniff! Bean soup! She's broke!" And the battered tin cover, and the old smoked-up saucepan, and the five-flight climb, and a thousand and one other things all combined to produce that thrill. Here was bohemia—gay, free, dirty, careless, starving, feasting, happy-go-lucky bohemia!

And I was in it, and a part of it, too! Don't you love Browning's "Youth and Art," and Thackeray's poem about the garret, and stories about

the youthful struggles of famous artists and writers, and all that sort of thing? I do. But until now bohemia had seemed so hopelessly far away. There aren't any bohemians in Leadville, you know.

And now here was I in a New York garret—and I was going to sigh deep, and laugh free, and starve, and feast, and despair, and be happy, and be a real bohemian, and have a perfectly gorgeous time.

It came about this way. Madge and Katherine had been school friends of mine in Leadville, our home town, and afterward at boarding school. They had always been very talented. Katherine began to write stories when she was in the primary grade, and Madge drew pictures before she knew how to write. And everybody knows that people of

great genius have always given signs of it at a very early age. I wasn't unusually gifted like Madge and Katherine, but I was very fond of music, and I wanted to be a good violinist, and perhaps, some day, a composer, too.

We decided while we were in boarding school that as soon as we got through we'd all go to New York together, and live in a garret, and be bohemians, and make names for ourselves. Neither Katherine nor Madge had mothers, and their fathers agreed to let them go after a good deal of coaxing. But it was different with me. I had an awful time persuading mother that a New York garret was the only place for me. She wouldn't hear of it at first, and then George interceded for me.

George is a Leadville boy, but he lives in New York now on account of his business. He's on a newspaper—not just a common reporter, you know, but something better than that, I don't know just what. I have a standing offer to marry George, and mother wants me to—she likes him. But he's awfully common and bourgeois, I think, especially considering the advantages he's had.

Anyway, George interceded for me. But by the time we'd got mother persuaded it was nearly three months after Madge and Katherine had gone. So when I got there I wasn't at all surprised to find them thoroughgoing bohemians.

Madge had come back to Leadville for a week to visit her father, and assure him that she was all right and wearing her winter underwear, but principally to get some more sheets, and towels, and things; and I had induced mother to let me go back with her.

So that's how Madge and I came to climb up to the flat—the garret, I mean—and find that Katherine was out, and there was nothing around to eat except bean soup, and consequently she must be broke.

A key turned in the lock just as we had made this discovery, and in rushed Katherine, loaded up to the eyes with

bulging paper bags, and all fresh air and cold-feeling pink cheeks, and her hair blown every which way with the wind, and her big red-brown eyes shining, and her little, white, tip-tilted nose looking tip-tilteder than ever.

"Cicely, old pal, I'm so glad you've got here at last! And I'm tickled to death to see you back, Madge!" she cried, hugging us in turn, and dropping the paper bags all over the floor, and pulling the hatpins out of her decayed summer hat—it was January—and then hugging us all over again. "I've been living on here, a lone, forlorn female, on bean soup and sauerkraut for the last three days. My allowance was two days late, and I'd spent all last month's. But I got the check this afternoon, and to-night we'll have a blow-out. Let's throw out this hogwash!"

And with that she made a dive for the bean soup, and dumped it all into the garbage pail.

"Come on, Cicely, and take off your things," called Madge, leading me into the next room. "This is the Drunkards' Home. You and I will sleep here, and Katherine sleeps on a cot in the studio. That's your cot, and you can have this shelf and these three pegs. We use this room for miscellaneous stuff, so it may seem a little untidy."

It did look a good deal like a Drunkards' Home. There were two cots in it, and a couple of trunks, and an old packing case for a dressing table, and a barrel to hold the overflow. In one corner half a dozen rough shelves bulged to the bursting point with clothes, shoes, drawing materials, umbrellas, old letters, blankets, pictures, and lots of other things; and a row of pegs under the shelves bristled with a collection of dresses, jackets, skirts, waists, raincoats, negligees, and kimonos in various stages of falling-to-piecedness.

I felt just a little taken aback when I saw that shelf and those three pegs, all bare and open, and exposed to dust and sunlight, which were to hold my nice, clean underwear and my cherished dresses. But the next moment I was thoroughly ashamed of myself. If I was going to be a bohemian, it was up

to me to be a real one; and real bohemians, I should have realized before, didn't wear carefully laundered underwear and immaculate gowns. All that sort of thing must now be put far behind me. Such garments were for people like the Leadvillians. And besides, I could keep my best things in my trunk.

After we'd taken off our things, Madge led me into the "studio," which was almost as untidy as the Drunkards' Home. It was all done in green and brown, and there was a big, wide couch with lots of pillows on it, and morris chairs, and bookcases, and all sorts of queer Chinese and Indian ornaments, and bits of dull-colored pottery, and punk sticks in a tall, slim vase with a dragon on it, and things like that. Katherine's desk was in one corner of the room, and Madge's art materials were littered over a table near one of the windows.

"Here, Madge, clear your paint rubbish off the table. I'm starving to death," cried Katherine, coming in from the kitchen with a blue-and-white-checked tablecloth that looked exactly like a Leadville duster.

"We wash it out once in a while between meals," she explained, "and dry it on the radiator. But we never iron it. What's the use?"

Madge had meantime swept her things off onto a corner of the floor, and Katherine spread out the blue-and-white cloth to its crumpled, skimpy extent, which wasn't quite enough to cover the table. But that only made it look all the more bohemian.

I followed Katherine out into the kitchen, and found that there was a big, luscious sirloin steak broiling under the gas oven, and sweet potatoes and asparagus cooking on top, and a brand-new bottle of mixed pickles, and another of olives, and another of pickled walnuts opened up, and some California grapes, and big, golden oranges, and seedless raisins heaped on an old tin plate, and a box of Somebody-or-other's best chocolates open beside it.

"This sizzling chunk of beef sounds toothsome to my nostrils after three days of bean soup and sauerkraut,"

said Katherine unctuously, as she pulled out the broiler and turned the steak, and lovingly eyed the rich juices trickling down into the pan below.

"What are all those bottles ranged around there, Katherine?" I inquired.

There was a narrow shelf some two feet from the ceiling, a sort of plate rack, running round the whole room, and this shelf was almost completely filled with a row of rather large bottles, all empty.

"Some beer," returned Katherine, "but mostly bug poison. In fact," she admitted, with some hesitation, "only two are beer. We tried it one night, but had to throw it out. I suppose it's an acquired taste," she added regretfully. "But the beer and the bug-poison bottles look exactly alike, so it doesn't really matter so much. They look bohemian, anyway—and we need the bug poison."

Suddenly there came a loud, whirring ring at the bell.

"I guess it's Mr. Merlyn," said Madge, running to push the button that opens the door downstairs, although I can't make out *how* it does it. "He often drops in about this time."

"Mr. Merlyn?" I echoed, inwardly wishing I answered to a lovely name like that.

"The chap I was telling you about as we were coming upstairs, don't you remember? He's delightful—a poor actor—had all sorts of hard luck, you know. He's so nice, and jolly, and informal, and bohemian! You'll be sure to like him."

The ring came at the door of the flat now, and Madge went. My heart was trying to crawl out of my throat. I, Cicely Allen, was going to meet a real actor!

"Hello, girls! Say, there's something in here that smells mighty good. I've run up to ask you to do me an awfully great favor. Oh, the Third Grace has arrived! So glad you've got here at last, dear Third Grace. Feel as if you were an old friend already. We're all old friends here—brothers and sisters, you know—and Art's our mother. Gad, what an artist-model face you



"Oh, nothing, only I haven't a single cent on me to pay the waiter."

have! There, with your head turned that way, you look absolutely Greek. Doesn't she, Madge? I think I'll call you Pandora. My best devoirs, admired Pandora."

And he made me one of those Louis Seize bows.

"Well, to return to our muttens," he continued, still talking all-run-together, as though he never needed to stop to breathe, "it's raining cats and dogs outside, and my shoes were thin, and my feet got wet, and I went into a little Third Avenue shop and bought me a pair of socks, and *please* won't you let me go into your bathroom and put 'em on?"

"Why, of course," said Katherine. "What a child you are! Run along and

hurry up, for dinner's almost ready, and we're all hungry enough to eat each other."

"Oh, am I invited to stay to dinner, too?" called back Mr. Merlyn, as he disappeared through the kitchen door.

"Of course you are," answered Katherine, "especially if you help to clean up afterward."

"Isn't he dandy?" exclaimed Madge, when he was out of hearing. "He's so merry, and boyish, and ingenuous, and with it all *so* clever. And, Cicely, it's easy to see that you've made a wonderful hit."

"But isn't he *awfully* unconventional, Madge?" I gasped.

I was ready and anxious to be bohemian. But, of course, in Leadville,

no young man was ever known to drop in and ask permission to change his socks. It's just an example of how old, bourgeois prejudices will stick.

"That's what all true bohemians are, my dear," replied Madge. "They scorn all stupid conventions."

Pretty soon we were all sitting around that skimpy, blue-and-white tablecloth, putting away that steak, and sweet potatoes, and asparagus, and all the *et ceteras*, and I was having my first bohemian meal. I wish some of the prim Leadville people could have seen that table—and our manners! The salt was in a typewriter-ribbon box, and you got it out with your fingers; and the spoons were in a tomato can; and there were only three cups, so Katherine had to use a Chinese vase. And Mr. Merlyn drank out of his saucer, and stirred his coffee with his fork, and altogether we had a delightful time.

Mr. Merlyn was the wittiest and most entertaining person I had ever listened to; and from the way he talked about Sarah Bernhardt, and Forbes Robertson, and Maude Adams, and lots of others you could see that they were intimate friends of his. Mind you, he didn't brag of it at all, as though they were anything unusual, but just spoke of them in an easy, offhand sort of way. I realized as I sat there that if I were to go back to Leadville that very night I would be different for ever after; I would have seen a side of life utterly beyond the Leadvillians.

After dinner we all sat around in the studio, and talked, and smoked cigarettes. Katherine and Madge had learned, but I hadn't yet, and they made me feel sort of dizzy and queer. To tell the honest truth, I felt a little guilty, too, as well as dizzy, for somehow I couldn't really *feel* that it was nice for girls to smoke. Of course, I *know* it's all right, and they've got as much right to do it as men, and it's only custom and resulting prejudice that make one feel otherwise. But custom and prejudice have an uncomfortable way of clinging to you sometimes.

While we were all smoking and talking about art, and literature, and the

drama, and things like that, there came another ring at the bell, and my heart was clutched by a sudden foreboding, and, sure enough, it turned out to be George.

Katherine brought him in, and introduced him to Mr. Merlyn, and there was an uncomfortable silence. Mr. Merlyn had been sitting near me, and George came and sat down on the other side of me, and the two men looked across me at each other as though they had been enemies from the cradle. Mr. Merlyn stopped telling us about his actor friends, and his experiences "on the road," and all that sort of thing, and hardly said a word, and looked awfully bored.

George looked bored, too, and didn't trouble himself to say much, which isn't at all like him, for he's usually very good-natured and jolly, I will say that for him, and the conversation lagged horribly. George just sat there, and looked *so* big, and masculine, and sort of stupid, and awfully out of place, and I didn't know whether I admired him or despised him.

Anyway, he spoiled our evening. He didn't stay very long, thank goodness! And I was sorry that Katherine, out of politeness, asked him to come up the next night to a literary evening that we were going to have. He said he might "drop around," and took himself off without even saying good night to me. And I don't care if he *was* jealous.

Before Mr. Merlyn went, he asked me if I wouldn't dine with him the next evening at a little Italian place he knew. Of course I said I would, for I was crazy to eat in a real bohemian restaurant. Then he called Katherine out into the kitchen, and whispered something to her. And she went into the Drunkards' Home, and came back and slipped something into his hand, and then he said "Ta, ta, girls," and went away.

"Poor fellow!" sighed Katherine, after the door had closed. "And he's so brave, and merry, and light-hearted through it all!"

"Through what?"

"Oh, he has a terrible time getting along. He isn't appreciated by managers. It's always like that with great geniuses. Do you know, sometimes he comes here about dinner time, when he hasn't had a single thing to eat all day. Think of that! I just lent him three dollars. He said his room rent was due, and he hadn't a cent."

"Why didn't you tell me before, Katherine?" I cried. "And I would never have accepted his invitation to dinner!"

"Oh, that's all right," returned Katherine; "that's bohemian—feast to-day and starve to-morrow. It's the only way to get true inspiration."

The next evening Mr. Merlyn called for me about seven o'clock—people dine awfully late in New York—and took me over to Gonfaloggia's, as it was called. It was full of little tables, with interesting-looking men and awfully stunning women chatting, and laughing, and drinking wine and smoking cigarettes, and leaning over the tables on their elbows, and calling the waiter *garçon*. We had wine and cigarettes, too, and real Italian spaghetti, and Gorgonzola cheese. I didn't like the wine or the cheese or the spaghetti or the cigarettes, but I suppose the taste for these things can be acquired.

And Mr. Merlyn called the waiter *garçon* in an easy, offhanded way, and said: "We'll have a quart together," just as in Thackeray's ballad, and I'm sure a real Paris café couldn't be any gayer or more bohemian.

Mr. Merlyn said the wine was very light, and you could drink gallons of it without its affecting you. But that pint that I had seemed somehow to go to my head—or else it was the cigarettes or the Gorgonzola cheese or all three together. Anyway, toward the end of the meal, I began to feel sort of different—not irresponsible, you understand, or anything like that, but somehow carried out of myself and uplifted. George says that's a slang term for intoxicated, but any intelligent reader will understand that that isn't what I mean.

The air gradually grew thick with tobacco smoke, and the people got gayer

and gayer, and I began to be all expansive, and emotional, and full of music and poetry. I felt as if I had it in me to do something wonderful—but not just then. In spite of all this, however, I was very careful not to talk much, for I had a feeling away in the back of my consciousness that if I did I *might* say something foolish. I was supremely happy, however. It was all like a strange, dim, and delightful dream.

But we had to leave early to get back in time for the literary evening which Madge and Katherine had gotten up especially for my benefit, in order to give me a chance to meet some of the literary and artistic friends they had made in New York.

Just as we were about to get up from the table, I noticed Mr. Merlyn going through his pockets, and a look of surprise and alarm gradually spreading over his face.

"What the deuce!" he gasped. "How in blazes? Oh, jumping Jehoshaphat, it's all in my other trousers pocket! There's a sample of the artistic temperament for you!"

"What is it?" I questioned.

"Oh, nothing, only I haven't a single cent on me to pay the waiter."

Fortunately I had brought some money with me. I felt rather queer when I began to move about and do things, and my hands hardly seemed to belong to me, but I managed to wiggle a ten-dollar bill out of the medley of things in my pocketbook, and slipped it into his hand under the table.

"You're a good pal!" he said, in his frank, merry way.

And then he paid the waiter, and gave him a tip, and put the change in his pocket, and we got into our wraps, and went out.

"It's hardly worth while giving you back the change," he laughed, when we were out in the street. "I'll just hang onto it, and give you back the whole X to-morrow—or, anyway, as soon as I can lay my hands on one."

When we got back to our garret, the people had all arrived, and one of them, a poet, was reading one of his poems



"Mutual-admiration society," murmured George, but I withered him with a look.

aloud. We slipped in very quietly, separating at the door. I dropped into the first empty chair I came to, and found to my annoyance that I had planted myself right next to George. To make matters worse, we were partly shut off from the others by a screen, and this gave George a chance to make remarks. He glowered at Mr. Merlyn, who had crossed to an empty chair in another part of the room, and then he turned to me and grinned.

"Hello, Cicely," he whispered, giving me a little dig in the ribs. I have known George ever since I was a baby, you know, and so he permits himself all sorts of liberties. "Something doing

every minute! The parlor po'ts are all on the rampage, and Pegasus is working overtime."

I felt at that moment that I fairly *hated* George. I was still in the mood for music, and poetry, and exalted things—although the fresh air on the way home had somewhat modified it—and George's mundane personality seemed perfectly odious. I was ready to be carried away on the wings of the spirit, and here I was being jerked unceremoniously back to earth.

"Hush, George!" I whispered severely. "Because you're a commonplace boor is no reason why you should be allowed to insult finer natures."



"Don't be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen," said the plain-clothes man.

George put on a provokingly meek and subdued look, and sat back.

"Our friend'll have apoplexy if he don't take it easier," he murmured to himself.

The poet who was reading *was* rather fat—for a poet—and he puffed and wheezed a good deal, as though he were troubled with asthma, which of course was the poor fellow's misfortune. His poem, as nearly as I could gather, was on the neglect of literature in America. It is neglected, you know, there's no doubt about that. And as he thundered out scathing lines about the "jackals of trade" and the "savage wild boars of commerce," his face grew so puffed and purple with poetic frenzy and righteous indignation that I really did fear he might burst a blood vessel.

He finished, however, without bursting one, and everybody clapped, and

said how fine it was, and how lamentably true, and how he ought to send it to *Harper's* or the *Atlantic*.

He said he'd sent it, and had it rejected in both places, and by all the other magazines in the country, too. And a rather sallow lady in robin's-egg blue—a poetess, but she oughtn't to wear that color with her complexion—said that that merely showed how little commercial editors knew or cared about real poetry.

"Mutual-admiration society," murmured George, but I withered him with a look.

"Won't Miss Allwyn let us hear one of her beautiful poems now?" said Katherine, who was acting as a sort of chairman.

"Gee!" was all George said when Miss Allwyn stood up.

She was a tall, slim, willowy lady, with very large green eyes and a very thin neck. She had on an amethyst-colored gown, and one of those barbaric necklaces—dull gold and green stones, you know—and her hair was parted in the middle and done in a Grecian knot behind. She wasn't very pretty, but she did look awfully artistic. She had a lovely English accent, too.

She read, in a very slow, and impressive, and measured way, a most beautiful sonnet about Oscar Wilde. I hadn't heard of Oscar Wilde before; he wasn't in our English literature course at boarding school, but he's a great poet, though of course not so great as Shakespeare or Longfellow.

When she finished every one sat speechless and overcome for a moment, and then they all broke out clapping.

"Cicely," whispered George in my ear, "the mentally unemployed have got a corner on all the advanced views going."

I pretended I didn't hear him, and turned to a lady in Nile green and a lorgnette on my other side.

"Does she write a great deal?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, indeed, my dear, she has written volumes. And it isn't only her poems—she told me once it was her great ambition to make her whole life an art work."

"I wonder if Mr. Carlingham has something for us to-night?" said Katherine in her office of chairman.

Everybody looked at Mr. Carlingham, who immediately stood up, and unfolded a rather large-looking manuscript. He was extremely thin, and had long hair, and a Windsor tie, and very large, dark, sad-looking eyes. He looked much as I imagine Keats or Shelley must have looked, and when he spoke his voice trembled and vibrated with deep emotion, and certain tones of it would thrill right down your spinal column. His wonderful voice brought back that exalted and carried-away feeling that George had been helping me to lose.

"Dubs who cultivate sentiment at the expense of humor are liable to take themselves too seriously, and die of it," came from George.

"George," I whispered, in as cutting a tone as I was capable of, "humor isn't the only thing in life. We don't all derive our mental sustenance from the almanac."

"I have here in my hand," began Mr. Carlingham, "the first part of a symbolic trilogy. Please bear in mind throughout the reading that the whole is symbolic. The scene opens in a forest. A terrible tempest is at its height. The main character, a wandering hermit, knocks at the door of a cottage to ask shelter. He enters, and the cottager offers him meat and wine, both of which he refuses. I ask you to remember that the drama is nothing if not taken symbolically. The meat symbolizes the things of the flesh—"

"And the wine the things of the spirit," murmured George in my ear.

"George," I snapped in exasperation, "have you no bump of reverence?"

I missed some of what the poet was saying by this silly interruption, and by the time I caught the thread he was telling us again how the drama was altogether symbolic, and how the hermit would eat only fruits and nuts, which are really the only proper foods for man, especially if he wishes to attain to any degree of spirituality.

"I hadn't noticed any signs of excessive spirituality in the squirrel," remarked George sotto voce.

When I got a chance to listen again after reprimanding George, the poet had begun reading.

"Cottager: Wilt have some venison, old man?"

"Hermit: Nay, sir; I eat but kindly fruits and the nuts that fall by the wayside in autumn."

"Cottager: Where livest thou?"

"Hermit (with solemnity): I live among the things you kill."

Whir-r-r-r-r-r, came a sudden, sharp ring at the bell. The poet stopped short, looking a little hurt and insulted, as was natural enough. Madge got up, and went to the door.

"There must be some mistake."

Madge's voice had a frightened ring in it, and the next moment there were three great, big men in the room, one in plain clothes, and the other two in regular, brass-buttoned policeman's uniforms. Everybody sat up and gasped, and the poetess in amethyst gave a little scream.

"Don't be alarmed, ladies and gentlemen," said the plain-clothes man, in a soothing, professional voice, something like a doctor's. "We're here for only one person. Here's our man!"

And he clapped his big, horrid, official hand down on the shoulder of—Mr. Merlyn.

"Samuel Jones, alias Montague, alias Joyce, alias Allerton, alias Merlyn, I have a warrant here for your arrest on the charge of obtaining money under false pretenses."

And before I realized what it all meant, they had surrounded poor Mr. Merlyn, and were leading him away. His face looked rather drawn, but he

turned around, and smiled his old, merry smile, and waved his hand to us.

"Good-by, girls," he called, "till we meet again. Ta, ta!"

And the next moment he was gone.

The other people all hurried away, too, for of course we couldn't go on reading poetry after that. Five minutes after Mr. Merlyn's arrest, there was no one in the place but ourselves—and George.

I felt rather glad that George had stayed, in spite of the fact that he had made himself so disagreeable all evening. After being pulled down to earth so suddenly, the poet people seemed all strange and unreal, and George sort of substantial and comforting.

"Say, girls," he said, with real concern in his voice, "it was a measly shame to go and pinch that artistic temperament on your premises. Don't cry, Kate; it'll all come out in the wash." Katherine was blubbering into her handkerchief. "If I'd thought the police had their noses so close to his track, I'd have got him out of here in time. As it was, I didn't want to offend you girls; I knew you liked him, and I thought I'd just hang around, and see that he didn't skin you all alive."

"W-w-w-what has he done to get put in jail?" sobbed Katherine.

"Oh, nothing much, I guess. Probably passed a bad check or worked some little swindling game."

"How do you come to know anything about him?" I asked a little defiantly.

"He once told me a hard-luck story,

and got twenty-five plunks out of me," returned George.

"And I thought he was so nice and so clever," mourned Madge, in a tone of hollow disillusionment.

"Never mind, Madge. We've all got to find out things some time or other. You don't know it now, but you three girls are worth seventy-five million of those mature, slushy would-bes you had here to-night—some of 'em knaves, and all fools. You'll learn before long what pigeonhole to put 'em in."

"Oh, it's awful!" wailed Katherine.

"Shucks, no! Worse things have been known to happen," comforted George. "You just forget about our fascinating friend Merlyn, and go on and enjoy yourselves. New York's a fine burg to be in, even though there are lots of Merlyns in it. Good night."

I went to the door with him, and he squeezed my hand so tight it hurt, and looked straight into my eyes with his clear, gray ones. George's eyes are fine, even if his nose does have a tendency to turn up.

"You won't think me too much of a buttinsky, Cicely, if I come and see you now and then while you're here?" he said, very gravely and respectfully for him. "You know I promised the mater to keep an eye on you until you got used to the ways of the Big Town."

"Why, no, George," I returned, "you're all right. At least, sometimes you're not half bad. Come as often as you like."

And I really meant it, too, after what had happened.





ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT HENCKE

JUDGE QUINN and Thomas Dorr came out of the "Home for the Aged," where there still lingered the faint odor of flowers and the recollection of a life that was now only a memory, and they stood on the steps a moment in the warm June sunlight.

"Now we'll go over, and I'll introduce you to Jim," said the judge. "He's a fine fellow, and lots of fun. You'll like to room with him. And then we'll go over and have a talk with your new boss. He's strict. Some of the fellows think he's hard, but—here's hoping you make good, Tom!"

"I'm a-going to," said Thomas Dorr.

The judge looked at the boy. He was tall, somewhat slighter than he used to be, and still rather serious; but the judge noticed with satisfaction that he was still self-reliant, and possessed of a determination and a strong, square chin.

"By Jove! I'll bet you will, too!" said the judge enthusiastically. "What an experiment!" he added under his breath.

Over at the end of the porch three old ladies looked at them, and nodded.

"She done well," said one. "Dear ol' Mis' Dorr! She's dead an' gone now."

But we are seven years ahead of our story.

One day, seven years before, there was an old lady out in front of the Home, kneeling on the grass beside a flower bed, weeding pansies. The morning sun, already hot, beat down upon her uncovered head until, as she put her hand upon it, the thin, gray hair seemed ablaze with the warmth. The very earth, moist and stifling, radiated heat, and the air wrapped itself about her like a blanket until the veins stood out on her forehead and white lines showed in its creases. Still she weeded on feverishly, in a sort of reckless haste, as if she feared the heavens would fall were the task not finished before she stopped.

A man who was passing by on the sidewalk, outside the fence, suddenly

caught sight of her, and came to an abrupt halt. She made a picture seldom seen in the city.

"Mother!" he called, half curiously, as if at a venture; and she looked up with a start just as he thought she would. "It's getting pretty hot to weed," he said. "Hadn't you better stop?"

"No! No! Not yet a while," she protested. And then she smiled, as if she realized she had fallen into his little trap. "Thank you, my son," she added; and smiled at him again, a queer, far-away, surprised, meditative sort of smile, at which he turned suddenly, and walked on as quickly as he had come.

When he reached the corner, he turned and looked back at her, and the old lady was still watching him. He waved his hand, and she waved back.

"There, now," she thought. "I'll warrant his mother used to hev a garden."

And all at once there came over her the memory of her own, with the day lily blooming up under the picket fence nearest the road, the tiger lilies next, poking their inquisitive heads quite through the pickets at the passing children; with the verberna beds, and the phlox, and the larkspur, and the pansies. And all at once there came to her the picture of a small boy kneeling there by her old pansy bed, tipping up each pansy by the chin to look into its face. She saw him so distinctly that she caught her breath; and she could hear him talking to each family, the white ones with purple whiskers in the center of the bed; the mourning, black ones on the edge; the happy-go-lucky yellow families, of whom there were so many, and who had so many new arrivals every morning. He always approved of prolific families.

The old lady suddenly raised herself, and straightened her back, and then all the hot air turned purple, and green, and red, and things went around and around and around in great circles. As order began to emerge out of the chaos, the landscape came into place again, and she found herself looking squarely into the very round face and the round, blue

eyes of a child who stood staring at her from outside the fence. She knew something of boys, had seen about all types in her lifetime; but never had she seen such a serious face, such unsmiling solemnity in any child eyes, such reliance and calm, uncomplaining acceptance of fate in any demeanor, as she now saw before her. And, in spite of all, he was short, and chubby, and not over eight years old.

A determination came into the old lady's face. She must make him smile. But how?

"Want to see gran'ma's pansies? Come in."

He continued to stare at her gravely. He had never seen any one so old; such an old, old lady, with such a very thin chin, such wrinkly, soft cheeks, such smooth, neat hair; with eyes that went back so far under the temples, and yet were alive and keen, and, oddest of all, were twinkling and sparkling away with fun and smiles like a little girl's.

"Come! Make haste! There's the gate."

She spoke and clapped her hands so briskly that he jumped and scuttled around through the gate in double-quick time.

"Kneel down here. That's right! Now we're fixed."

Her voice, a bit quavering and thin, ran up and down the scale in the most charming, intimate way, and she laid her hand on his shoulder as they bent over the bed together.

"See the little faces, eh? What d'ye think of that? See their foreheads and cheeks—and here's its chin. Pretty fat for a chin, ain't it?"

She laughed coaxingly, and glanced at the boy. Not a smile! She tried again.

"See the whiskers on this old white feller! Well! Well! An' if they ain't purple! Whoever heerd tell of sech a thing? Purple whiskers! An' comin' down right over his chin fer all the world like a pussy cat's. Hum! Hum!"

Even that failed. He was interested, undoubtedly, keenly interested, as a scientist might have been over a new specimen. Yet there was none of the



Thomas squirmed and fought the dripping, soapy wash cloth.

Then his chest began to heave, and the old lady, observing with experienced eyes the symptoms of coming storm, rose suddenly and took the boy by the hand.

"I ain't a-goin' ter send ye back, Tommy. Don't git scared, now. 'Come along in with gran'ma, an' see her asylum. I've got— Oh! Oh! Help gran'ma! She's fallin'."

The quick rise from her long, kneeling posture was almost too much for the stiff old joints. As she tottered, Thomas all at once squared the young shoulders on which she placed her hands, and steadied her by holding her arm tightly in his grasp.

"Don't get scared now," he said, unconsciously using her very words. "I'll hang onto you, gran'ma."

And when she had recovered, they took hold of hands, and went into the house together. The great hall was cool, and, as the door shut upon it, dark

after the blinding light of the hot sun. The old lady turned down a long corridor at the right, moving, for some reason, noiselessly, and motioning the boy to do the same. She noted, almost subconsciously, that they met no one either in the entrance hall or in the corridor, and she remembered it afterward. So they came to the door of her room, and went in, shutting it behind them.

The first thing the boy noticed was a faint, sweet odor of dried rose leaves which hung in the air, insistently suggestive of lives whose heyday was over, but whose loveliness still remained like a benediction. The white shade over the window was drawn, subduing the light on the white walls where a few old pictures hung in their heavy black walnut frames; one, its frame ornamental above the others by the addition of a rim of faded blue velvet next the glass, the picture of a small boy in a gingham dress stiffly sitting in a chair.

checked

There was a white iron bed in one corner, neatly covered with a snowy counterpane, an old-fashioned chest of drawers with glass knobs, an oval mirror hanging on the wall over it, a small, drop-leaf table, on which lay a gay afghan, half finished, the knitting needles laid neatly in place. And there was an ottoman, with four short walnut legs and a gayly colored top, depicting an incredible bird skimming by one wing through a dark-red sky.

Thomas liked the ottoman, and sat down upon it. The legs were just the length of his own from the knee down.

When the old lady had finished washing her hands in the large closet, through whose open door the boy caught a glimpse of a washstand with a white bowl upon it, she came back to sit down in the great walnut rocker, and they began to talk. They talked of many

things. Gran'ma Dorr talked about when she was a little girl, and about when her son was a little boy. Thomas learned all about the pansy town in the flower bed, and the old garden, and the village, and the schoolhouse.

Presently the old lady put on a white apron that came to the very hem of her black dress, picked up a pair of gold spectacles, and put them on; took her afghan, and began to knit. As she knitted she rocked; and as she rocked her chair found a lovely, squeaky board under the rag rug, which squeaked a soft, comfortable, homelike squeak every time the rocker went backward.

Then Thomas pushed on the castors of his ottoman until they reached the bed, where he found a back against which to lean easily. He curled up his legs under him, and they talked some more. He told her about the orphans in the asylum, about the large room where they ate, about the long dormitory where each boy had his own bed, with the chair by it; the schoolroom, and the teacher—"I just hated her. We all did," he said—and the brick-paved yard where they had played.

Gran'ma Dorr asked suddenly:

"Where were ye a-plannin' to go, Tommy?"

"I dunno," he replied, and lapsed into a long, listless silence.

"All orphan asylums ain't like that one, ye know, Tommy. D'ye think," she inquired cautiously, "thet 'twas right fer ye to run away?"

"Why ain't it?" he countered. "There ain't no one there who cares nothin' about me." And then he added again: "I ain't never going back."

All at once there was a knock on the door. They both jumped. The knitting fell to the floor, and Thomas sprang off from his stool, and stood, tensely listening.

"Shall I hide in the closet?" he whispered.

Gran'ma Dorr gave a quick nod.

As the door shut behind him, she called out, "Come in" in a quavering voice, and the matron entered.

She was large, and pleasant, and smiling.

But Gran'ma Dorr knew that back of her stood the "Board."

"Well," said the matron briskly, "I haven't seen you since breakfast. Won't you come out in the sitting room with the others? It's nice and cool there."

"I—I ain't feelin' jest real well," said Gran'ma Dorr slowly. "I wonder ef I mightn't hev my lunch here in the room by the windy?"

"Why, surely," agreed the matron. "Where do you feel badly, gran'ma?"

"Nowheres in particular," answered the old lady truthfully. "It's jest the heat. I'd kinda like some milk to drink, a-plenty of it. Seems like 'twould make me feel more chipper."

"All right," agreed the matron again, and went out.

Grandma Dorr ate very sparingly of the luncheon that a white-aproned maid brought presently on a tray. She told Thomas she seldom ate much at noon. The boy, however, was hungry, making quick work of the bread and butter, and cold meat, and the pitcherful of fresh milk; and when the maid returned, she was surprised to find the pitcher quite empty, and the tray likewise.

In the afternoon, from the depths of her old bureau, Grandma Dorr produced an old "parchesi" board, and initiated the boy into the mysteries of the game. They played until Tommy's head began to nod and his eyelids to droop lazily; then the old lady rolled him unceremoniously onto the bed, where he slept until supper time. While he slept, she knitted, and rocked, and planned. If she were going to keep him, she must devise some way to give him exercise, and manage some way of feeding him which should both provide sufficient nourishment for him, and prevent any suspicion on the part of the matron and maids. At last she thought of a scheme.

"Tommy," she asked him when he woke, "what say now? Kin ye get along on these crackers while I go an' set at the table so folks won't suspicion us? An' then Tommy an' gran'ma'll go an' hev their supper down the street together."

"Yes'm," said Tommy. "But how'll we get out?"

"Hark to me, an' I'll tell ye," said the old lady, whispering in his ear. "While gran'ma's at supper, 'tain't likely there'll be folks in the halls; so you jest squint out the door, an' ef ye don't see no one, you jest hustle out the door and run down the street ter the corner. You wait fer gran'ma by the fruit store there, an' she'll come jest as soon as she kin get through supper."

The plan worked admirably. And for supper they went over into the park which was near, and sat at a lunch counter in the refectory, both blissfully unconscious of the interest they caused among the other patrons. Then they took a long walk in the park. Tommy climbed a tree at the old lady's instigation, and, after due and proper exercise, returned to the Home. How to get the boy back in was the next problem; but the old lady solved that, too.

"Ye kin climb fine, Tommy," she said. "I watched ye when ye clum the tree. Now jest you wait till it gets good an' dark, an' there's no one left on the porch. Then you jest climb up over the railin', and gran'ma'll let ye in at the windy. Kin ye do it, think ye?"

Tommy could, and did. She undressed him, and put him to bed at nine o'clock on the back side, crept in herself after his regular breathing told her he slept, and lay there, open-eyed, until dawn. She felt no compunctions whatever. If the people at the asylum were worried about him, she was glad. Her only fear was that they were not.

So one day passed. The next was much the same, with slight changes in the bill. The old lady told him stories, and pulled out from the lower drawer of her dresser a red and gold fairy book, which had wonderful pictures in it of dragons, and giants, and princesses with golden hair.

"Tommy," said Gran'ma Dorr, "no matter what happens, that book's to be yours."

No matter what happens! They were both silent at the words, and gradually a realization of their situation came to them, a fear that the time was coming, the dread day of reckoning, when they would be discovered and separated.

Against that time, they threw discretion to the winds, and for three, hot, delirious days dared fate to do its worst.

To Thomas a new world had opened, a world wherein he discovered for the first time the true heritage of childhood. And the old lady yearned over him with all the longings of grandmotherhood denied; rejoiced in his warm, plump little body; in the winsome childishness that gradually began to emerge from its hiding place under her skillful touch—for once, in a story, he actually laughed three times in the right place—and lastly, she did what all grandmothers, for some unexplainable reason, take their most infinite joy in doing—she washed his face and neck for him.

Thomas squirmed and fought the dripping, soapy wash cloth, the firm determination of the hand from which there seemed no escape; and his indignation added fuel to the fire of the old lady's persistency. If he could not get himself clean, then she must. That was the whole argument in a nutshell. And, after that battle, their understanding and growing affection for one another were doubled.

Yet the crash came! And it happened at supper time, on the third day, as Thomas was making his way hurriedly through the front hall. He ran squarely into the matron.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

Thomas knew that tone, he knew the figure of the Home matron; and, although he was so scared that his knees were shaking together, he replied promptly:

"I ain't doin' nothing."

"Where have you been?"

"Nowhere."

But denial was fruitless, as Thomas knew instinctively that it would be; and it was really only a short space of time until the two culprits found themselves back in Gran'ma Dorr's room facing the puzzled matron, who, looking from one nervous figure to the other, was, for once in her life, entirely nonplused. She wondered, as she had wondered often before in her eventful life, why children who yearned for "mothering,"



"You may keep him here, Mrs. Dorr," she said at last, "until the board meets and decides on the case."

and old ladies who were starving for something to mother, should be kept in separate homes, where philanthropic directors tried artificially to supply these instinctive demands.

"You may keep him here, Mrs. Dorr," she said at last, "until the board meets and decides on the case. Let him come to the table with us. The other ladies will like to see him. And we'll fix it all up somehow."

She patted the old lady's shoulder, kissed the child, and left the room.

First, she telephoned the orphan asylum, and explained the situation. As Tommy had foreseen, as Gran'ma Dorr had feared, the fact that a child was missing had not greatly disturbed that particular institution. Then she called up the president of her board of managers, and talked with her long and earnestly.

"She wants to adopt the child," said the matron. "She says she has several hundred dollars in the bank, a little at interest, and can clothe and feed him as long as she lives. In the morning? Yes, if you could call a meeting here. Thank you so much."

The morning came, and with it the

board meeting. The ladies were unspeakably agitated by the situation.

"So dramatic!" said one. "And so impossible," added another.

That was the general consensus of opinion until they adjourned to Gran'ma Dorr's room to talk it over.

"My dear Mrs. Dorr," said the president, "think of the child's future. For the present, the arrangement might suffice. But after you die—what, then?"

"'Twouldn't be any worse, nor as bad, as now. An' we, Tommy an' I, could be hevin' each other fer the few years left us before I'm dead an' gone."

"But the money," protested another. "I've some left. I'd pay ye faithful."

"But what of the other ladies in the home? It would be contrary to all precedent."

"I'd share him," said the old lady. "Gran'ma wouldn't be selfish with ye, would she, Tommy? But he'd be mine. An' he'd hev this influence in his life before he's turned loose on the world ag'in."

"There's a little room at the end of the hall he could have," suggested the matron suddenly. "We've never rented

it to any of the old ladies because it has seemed too small. But we use it only for a linen closet."

The board of managers, uncertain and worried, adjourned to think the matter over for several days; and Thomas, in the meantime, was to remain with his newly found grandmother. It was an added complication that the matron had so suddenly championed the cause; for she assuredly had, to the extent that she took up the cudgel in their behalf, and made a call that very evening.

It was upon Judge Quinn. His capacious heart had a fine faculty for acting as first aid to the injured in cases juvenile and adult, in and out of court, as the matron, who had worked with him once for several months, well knew. Moreover, he lived only two blocks from the Home.

She stated her case simply and directly, while the judge stood and stroked his mustache, and pondered.

"And it was strange how it came about," mused the matron, in conclusion. "She was out weeding her pansy bed—"

"What!" cried the judge. "Is it that one?"

The matron waited for him to explain, and, while she waited, the clock on the mantel ticked out five full minutes.

Suddenly, "She's equal to it," Judge Quinn said. "She and I had a little chat of our own that very morning." He laughed boyishly at the recollection of it. Then he added quite simply: "She reminded me of mother. We used to have a garden, and she used to weed out in the hot sun, too. Funny how determined they are!"

"Isn't it?" agreed the matron.

"Jove!" said the judge. "I like the spunk of that old lady and that youngster. I'll be over at your board meeting. And wait—I'd like a squint at gran'ma and Tommy first. You fix that up for me, too."

The board of directors were astounded and distinctly impressed by the presence at their meeting of such a distinguished visitor. But his proposition,

seconding as it did Gran'ma Dorr's, almost took their breath away.

"My dear judge," said the president, "do you realize that you're asking us to take upon ourselves the responsibility of this child's life?"

"In a way, yes, since you are responsible for the old lady. But she's fully capable of managing that boy as long as she lives. If the child hated the orphan asylum sufficiently to run away, it's assuredly not the place for him. Jove! He shan't go back. Who is there to take the responsibility of his life? Responsibility!" The judge was headed straight for a flight of oratory. "Responsibility!" he repeated. "Here's an old lady who's willing to assume it, begging to have it, ready to give up her whole bank account to the cause. Why can't he stay here till she dies, go to school—"

"That's it," interrupted one antagonist. "Will the boy want to tell at school that he lives at the Home for the Aged? The other boys will laugh at him. He'll—"

"I rather think," said the judge thoughtfully, when his oratory had recovered from the tumble it took, "that it will be a good way to test his mettle."

"How will the other old ladies take to the idea of having a child about, with his noisy play and his playmates?"

"I'll see to that," said the matron. "They shall not be disturbed. The boys can play marbles on the floor of my private sitting room, if necessary, and I'll cork up the door. But, you see, I've been talking to the old ladies about it. They are—just crazy about the plan. And they've all lost their hearts to Tommy."

The ladies wavered.

"After her death—what?" they asked.

"I'm mighty anxious, for many reasons, to make this experiment," replied the judge. "After her death, I'm willing to make myself personally responsible for the boy."

Fifteen minutes later, the matron threw open the door to admit Tommy and Gran'ma Dorr, hand in hand, their faces beaming. Judge Quinn laid his hand on his heart, and made a bow.

"Our Lady of the Pansy Bed!" he said, half to Tommy.

The eyes of Gran'ma Dorr and the judge met in a sudden flash of understanding as Tommy's hand flew likewise to his heart, and he made a bow which was, in angle and grandeur, an exact replica of the judge's own.

"You see," said the judge to the ladies, "you haven't appreciated Tommy."

The judge and Thomas Dorr, as they

left the Home for the Aged, paused by a sort of tacit consent at the pansy bed where the velvet blossoms were now in the height of their beauty. All at once Thomas stooped down to hide something that would come into his blue eyes, and he picked a flower for his buttonhole. Suddenly the judge did the same, for the same reason.

Judge Quinn's was a black pansy, with a golden heart; but the boy's was a large white one with purple whiskers.



The Gypsy Rain

I KNEW the Spring was coming when I heard the gypsy rain,
With its castanets, soft dancing close beside my windowpane;
I marked its wayward footsteps on the April-shimmered hill,
With its cloud gray, misty mantle folded shadow close, and still,
And I heard its crystal laughter just beyond my darkened sill.

I know the varied kindly rains, I know and love them all,
The rain of green young growing things, with softly cadenced fall;
The shore rain, the sea rain, with wave spray in its beat,
The slow rain, the dull rain, that cools a city street—
But oh, the springtime, gypsy rain, it calls to me more sweet!

There's the scent of upland camp fires in its night-sweet finger tips,
And the breath of pine and heather in its laughter-dropping lips;
With its castanets, soft dancing down the white-starred hawthorn lane,
Star-gold bangles fitful glancing through my mist-dimmed windowpane—
Then I know the Spring is nearing when I hear the gypsy rain!

MARTHA HASKELL CLARK.

Parlay-Voo

By
Wallace
Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY
HY. MAYER



WHEN I was on the coast o' France a-loafin' by the sea,
I met a maid named Adelaide, and fond I grew o' she;
Though all her words was Greek to me, and mine was Dutch to her,
I sometimes squeezed 'er little thumb, and listened to 'er pur,
"Parlay-voo, parlay-voo,
Voolay-voo, see-see!
Allay-voo, shallay-doo!"
Or so it seemed to me.

I called upon 'er afternoons, a-actin' quite refined,
A-tryin' to explain to 'er me ardent state o' mind.
But though I loved 'er faithful, there was sameness, I confess,
In her remarkin' "Parlay-voo," and me respondin' "Yes."
"Parlay-voo, parlay-voo,
Dooley-diddy-dot!
Juska-la! Askya pa!"
Or them's the words I got.

One day I donned me derby hat to call on Adelaide;
There sot me messmate Artie Jones consolin' that sweet maid.
But what most turned me eyes to green, and caused me cheek to blench,
Was the fact that Artful Artie was addressin' 'er in French!
"Parlay-voo, parlay-voo!
Do-see-do!" says she.
"A la carte!" whispers Art.
Or so it seemed to me.

"Oh, this will never, never do!" unto myself says I.
 And so that night I spoke to Art before the tide was high.
 "Friend Art," says I, "pray what's the word in French for 'I love you'?"
 With honest eye me friend replied: "Say simply: '*Taisez vous*'!"
"Taisez vous, taisez vous,"
 Warbled Arthur dear.
 With joy I heard the magic word
 That fell upon my ear.

So when the gentle tide was high, to Adelaide I sped,
 A hundred cordial parlay-voos to welcome me she said.
 I snuggled closely to her ear, and whispered: "*Taisez vous*!"
 She jumped. She shrieked. Then with a chair she smote me six times two.
"Taisez vous? How-dee-doo!
 Go long queek—ta-ta!
 Ze stupid freak ze French to speak!
 Insulting—la-la-la!"

Alas! Within that Frenchy port the marriage bells soon rang:
 It was for Art and Adelaide they made their merry clang.
 What had I said to rile 'er so? I fled, a slave to worry,
 And hunted up this "*Taisez vous*" within a dictionary.
"Taisez vous—taisez vous!"
 Oh, gosh, my deep disgrace!
 Had I but knew that "*Taisez vous*"
 Was French for "Close yer face!"



A TIMELY TRUCE



ILLUSTRATED BY
E. C. CASWELL

By ELMORE
ELLIOTT
PEAKE

CAPTAIN RHETT BEAUFORT, C. S. A., reined his drooping horse between the cobblestone gateposts of Beacon Hill Plantation. He had last cantered up the ascending driveway with half a dozen other students from the University of Virginia, a dress suit in his carpetbag, and a college song on his lips. Alas, four years of war had intervened. Of the fine old country seat only one wing was left. Hence, between the pain in his left shoulder, and the melancholy, blackened ruin rising through the trees ahead, he could have wept.

But there was an insuperable obstacle to his resorting to this unmanly form of relief—namely, the presence of a young woman, who sat her beautiful chestnut mare with the unconscious grace and security of the thoroughbred Southern planter's daughter. Her habit was travel-stained, her skin tanned, and she must have been weary. Yet an indomitable cheerfulness emanated from her, and she maintained a niceness of person best exemplified by her hair—a thick, dark, wavy mass half concealing her ears, and gathered back into a heavy, shining knot, which snuggled into the nape of her neck.

This coiffure had become nothing less than a study to Beaufort, and sometimes, when in the rear, he would ride miles without consciously observing any

other object. For twelve days now, starting at Columbia, the two had way-fared together—on crawling, scheduleless railroad trains packed with soldiers and refugees, in carriages when carriages were obtainable, and, since leaving Richmond, on horseback.

For the last four days they had ridden the rutted clay roads of Piedmont, Virginia, amid the litter of war—knapsacks and guns, crippled mules, wrecked ammunition wagons, abandoned artillery, and, worst of all, dead men whom none had had the leisure to bury. They had baited and lodged in crossroad taverns, negro cabins, deserted planters' homes; and twice they had slept upon the ground, with the star-spangled sky for a coverlid.

Yet each morning, Beaufort observed, that knot of glossy hair appeared in its accustomed niche, apparently as firm and indestructible as a fluted ball of ebony. Its wearer glowed as if fresh from a marble tub. Nor was this all the tale. Fatigue, hunger, wet clothing, the squalor and misery so often presented to their view, wrung no murmur from her. She parched corn over a roadside fire with the dignity of a hostess pouring tea. She forded swollen streams, and ran the gantlet of drunken negroes and guerrilla bands in a quiet, matter-of-fact way which had thrilled the heart of her escort.

On the flagged terrace of Beacon Hill stood an aged, white-wooled negro, shading his eyes with one hand as he scrutinized the approaching pair. On recognizing Beaufort, he hobbled forward with alacrity.

"God bless you, young marster!" he exclaimed fervently. "Couldn't distinguish at fust whether you friend or enemy."

"Are you all that's left, Uncle Absalom?" asked the young officer.

"On'y me and Susie. Nary a niggeh, nur a hoss, nur a cow, nur a pig. Not even a turkey. Jus' a few yaller-legs Ah keep in the lof'. Sojers got all the rest."

"Yankees, of course," observed Beaufort slyly.

"Mos'ly, marse, mos'ly. Some Confedduts, too, though. And it do seem, marse, the Confedduts even more hungrier as the Yanks."

"No doubt of that, unc'. But let me introduce Miss Tattersall. The Yankees drove her from Mobile, then from Savannah, then from Columbia, and now she's on her way to her mother at Harper's Ferry. As I happened to be coming this way, I had the honor to be appointed her military escort."

The old man made his obeisance.

"Welcome, missy, to Beacon Hill—what's left. But, marster, what you doin' down Columbia way? Ain' your rigyment up dis away somers?"

"Yes, but I haven't been with it for nearly six months. Got a ball in my chest at Cedar Creek last October."

"And he got a bad fall from his horse yesterday, from which he has had fever all day," interposed Miss Tattersall. "You needn't take the trouble to deny it, captain," she added, aside. "So, even before you get us any supper, uncle, I want you to be so good as to fetch me a bucket of hot water, some ground mustard, and some nice clean strips of muslin."

"Do nothing of the kind, Absalom!" commanded Beaufort.

Absalom's white teeth gleamed in a smile.

"Marse Rhett, Ah reckon Ah ain't approach this near the grave 'thout

I'arnin' who to take mah orders fum. Sides, when young leddies learn how to make a poultice, they bound smack 'em spang on ev'y chance they git, and you nachally cyarn stop 'em. Missy, Ah got hot watch an Ah got mus'ard, but Ah declare befo' Gawd there ain't nary strip o' muslin in this hyar house. Even the sheets and pillercases was done scraped into lint long 'fore ole mistis set out fer Richmond."

"Leave that part to me, then," she answered, swinging down from her horse before Beaufort could offer his assistance.

Thirty minutes later she invaded the captain's room with her hands full of things, and an executive air upon her face. Absalom brought up the rear, with a steaming bucket of water, in which one could have scalded a half-grown pig.

"Now, captain," began Miss Tattersall, with a slight flush, "I've nursed sick soldiers before, and we'll start out right by adopting the etiquette of the hospital, not the drawing-room. Please remove your coat, waistcoat, collar, and shirt, and allow me to see that you don't wrench your shoulder in doing so."

Beaufort feebly protested that Absalom could give him the necessary care, which protest she coolly ignored. She worked swiftly and deftly. After his outer garments were removed, she drew a pair of little scissors from her belt, snipped the sleeve of his undershirt clear around, and removed it from his arm. Another series of rapid snips laid the garment open from the edge of the amputated sleeve to the neck, baring an inflamed, swollen shoulder, which was further disfigured by a large, yellowish-green bruise. Hot applications followed, until Miss Hallie's fingers were as pink as salmon. Next the poultice was prepared, and, with a dexterous twist of the wrist, such as one employs to turn a flapjack, it was dropped in place, and bandaged securely with fold after fold of cambric strips, the last loose end of which she secured with a safety pin.

Lying in bed that night, on the borderland of delirium, face flushed, eyes

bright with fever, Beaufort said dreamily to Absalom, who was watching at his side:

"Uncle, when this war is over I'll send you the first five-dollar gold piece I lay my hands on if you'll tell me where these bandages came from."

"Missy done got 'em somers, marse."

"But where?"

"Why, marster, you think ole Abs'lom done got second-sight, to 'cognize whar people fin' things?"

"I can't sleep till I know," sighed the invalid wearily.

Absalom still hesitated, his chivalry making him reluctant to tell what the young lady had not herself seen fit to tell. But in the end, after a cautious glance at the door, he placed his thick lips close to the other's ear, and whispered hoarsely:

"Marse Rhett, Ah don't know fur certain, but fum the scraps Ah seen on the flo' as Ah done pass missy's do', Ah has my s'picions. Ah s'picion she done cut up her nightgown to git them strips."

Beaufort groaned. "I thought so. They smell of violet water."

He fell into uneasy slumber, and dreamed a dream. The war had just begun. He was riding through the garlanded streets of Columbia, at the head of his handsome Congaree Rangers, with their white-crested helmets and glittering accouterments. Far from his mind were poverty, hunger, death—war's horrid train. A short and merry fight, and then home again, covered with glory—that was his thought. So he dipped his helmet right and left at the beves of bright-eyed, dimity-clad maidens who fluttered handkerchiefs and threw kisses from veranda and gate.

As he rode on, however, one of the maidens—in the impossible way of dreams—seemed to fly before him, like an angel. And when the battle came, and he was wounded, and lay faint and sick upon the field, with the stars swimming before his eyes, this maiden brought him water in the cool white palm of her hand, and fanned his hot face with her wings. Loving her, he strove to embrace her. But her body was as intangible as air, and each time

he brought his weary, empty arms back to his breast with a bitter sense of loss.

But one day the beautiful face came nearer than before, seemed more like flesh and blood. And, lo, he recognized it as Miss Tattersall's. At the same time he perceived that he lay in a bed, with a broad bar of sunlight crossing the floor, and the song of birds floating in at the window.

"What has happened?" he asked blankly.

"You have been a very sick boy for three days," answered the other. "But you're much better now—no fever for twenty-four hours, and sleeping like a babe."

What followed was as inevitable as the burgeoning of leaves in the spring. Though sick and detained from the fast-thinning ranks of his country's army, a great peace encompassed Beaufort. The past four years, which had seen his beloved Southland scourged by fire and sword, its men fall like autumn leaves, and its women turned to stone from grief, lost something of their horror. The carnage, from a piteous waste of human life, became sublimated into a splendid sacrifice. His chamber, though only a nook in a ruin, seemed the coziest of retreats. And all because a young woman went quietly to and fro, shaking up his pillows, and setting vases of wild flowers upon his table.

The first day that he sat up Hallie prepared a little feast in a chafing dish, which Absalom had exhumed from its hiding place in the ground. She had obtained the simple ingredients—coffee, flour, and a can of shrimp—at Riven Oak, a hamlet fifteen miles away. But this he was not allowed to know, as the thought of her having ridden alone through the outlaw-infested country might have spoiled his appetite.

At the little store she had also got hold of a week-old copy of the *Richmond Examiner*, and after the meal she placed a taboret beside his easy-chair, and sat down and read to him. To show him a cartoon, she laid the paper across his lap, and went on reading with it in that position, her elbows on the arm of his chair, her cheeks in her palms, her



"Welcome, missy, to Beacon Hill—what's left."

mass of hair, delicately scented by a spray of crab-apple bloom, just below his face.

Presently he became intensely conscious of the intimacy of their posture. He ceased to hear the words—only her voice. His heart began to throb, and he closed his eyes to escape the spell which was falling over him.

But not for long—the spell was too sweet. Then, as if the atmosphere had become charged with telltale currents from his bosom, she ceased to speak. She still pretended to read to herself, but he detected, beneath her lowered lashes, her lustrous, dilated eyes, flooded with a kind of maidenly fear. Her body, too, from mere quiescence, grew tense. Yet she seemed powerless to move.

The next moment, almost without his volition, he encircled her shoulders with his arm.

"Hallie, my dear, I must have you for my very own," said he softly.

She made no struggle, but yielded to

the touch of his hand, and leaned her head against his breast. Yet her whole mien—her quickened breath, heaving chest, and twitching lips—was that of a snared bird, helpless from fear, but apt at any instant to make a wild beating of its wings. And, when he gently and guardedly lifted her averted face, she did place her hands against him to hold herself aloof.

"Wait! Captain Beaufort—Rhett—I must tell you—you must not kiss me—you do not understand—I should have told you before that—that—"

She broke off, panting, distressed, but lovelier than ever in his eyes.

"Tell me nothing except that you love me!" he commanded, with rising passion, placing his lips closer to hers.

The corners of her mouth drooped pathetically, her lashes grew darker with tears, and then—as woman ever must when Eros has betrayed the secret entrance to the citadel of her heart—she surrendered. With a fluttering sigh, with closed eyes, like one about to take

a dizzy leap, she laid her lips to his, and, groping for his hand, clasped it tightly in her own.

"Oh, Rhett, what have we two done!" she murmured.

The doughty soldier was entirely satisfied with what had been done, and, though practically penniless, he would, but for one thing, have instantly dispatched old Absalom, by "mule express," for the nearest parson. That one thing was his remembrance that Hallie's immediate duty was to go on to her mother. His sickness had already detained her too long. The Union front was now only forty miles away, and she could easily reach it by a daylight ride, under the care of one of the military couriers who daily passed the house. The sooner she went, the sooner they could be married, other things being equal. So he urged her to go. But she

was loath to leave him in the hands of the aged negro couple.

"I'll do this," she said finally. "I'll ride over to Riven Oak again to-morrow for some more supplies. Then, if I get enough to assure me that you won't have to adopt a diet of dandelion greens, I'll go on."

"No more cross-country junketing for you, my lady, with a cutthroat behind every milepost," said Beaufort flatly.

"Then no North for me," she retorted.

In the end she went, with Beaufort's revolver, which she could operate as skillfully as he, in her saddlebag.

At nine o'clock of a rainy night, whose wet murk was like a sable scarf about one's eyes, she had not yet returned. Beaufort, with a pale face, furiously paced his room, alternately cursing slavery and States' rights, Confederates and Yankees, North and South, his own helplessness, and, above all, his weakness in having let Hallie go. Then, picturing his beloved dragging at the stirrup of her runaway mare, or lying by the roadside with her white face turned up to the pitiless rain, his mood would soften and his lips quiver.

Old Absalom, keeping him company, occasionally uttered a pious ejaculation. Ten o'clock came—nothing but the steady thud of the rain. Eleven o'clock—gusts which shook the saturated trees and imitated the distant gallop of a horse. Twelve o'clock—silence except for the gurgling of the drowning earth.



He ceased to hear her words—only her voice.

"Absalom, for God's sake, pray!" suddenly cried Beaufort.

And Absalom prayed—first in a low, humble, tentative voice, as if searching out the whereabouts and temper of his God; then louder and with more confidence, as he felt the impouring of the spirit; in the end, with rapt face, uplifted arms, and swaying body, the frenzied words poured from his lips in a roaring cataract of sound.

After his subdued, anticlimactic "Amen and amen!" the room was as quiet as a chamber of death, both men still kneeling. Then came the shrill nicker of a horse.

The two men reached the porte-cochère entrance just as a drenched, hatless figure stepped within. Her hair was as untrammelled as a mermaid's, hanging heavily down her back. But the thing which instantly caught Beaufort's eye was a bloodstained handkerchief knotted about her left hand.

"Just a scratch from a low-hanging branch in the dark," she explained, in answer to his inquiring gaze. "It got my hat, too."

The stock of eatables in Riven Oak's single store, according to her tale, would not have lured a mouse from its hole. So she set out for Windsor Courthouse, fifteen miles farther on. "Befo' Gawd, missy!" exclaimed Absalom. But as she neared the town she discovered a body of horsemen to the south of her—that is, between her and home. Whether they were Union, Confederate, or guerrilla she could not determine, but, fearing confiscation of her horse, to speak of nothing worse, she abandoned her errand in Windsor, and turned west, along a grass-grown road, in order to circumvent the horsemen.

At the first intersecting north-and-south road, she again discerned cavalry to the south—evidently a guard, for they had pitched a tent by the roadside. It was not until she reached the third road that she found the way clear. By this time darkness had fallen, she had lost her bearings, and could only steer a general southerly course until she could obtain directions from some one.

Few people, however, traveled at

night in these perilous times, or invited assassination by showing a light. Hence she met no one; and when she finally descried the blurred glow of a lamp through the storm, she found that it proceeded from a cabin of roistering negroes, to whom she naturally dared not make herself known. Dropping the reins, she gave her mare a free head. For hours the animal stolidly plashed through mud and water, as tired and dispirited as her rider. But at last she broke into a canter, which ended in the porte-cochère of Beacon Hill.

No mention of a man! Yet Beaufort had noted that the handkerchief about her hand was a man's!

Afterward, in bed, he pooh-poohed the idea that this fact had any significance; assured himself that a woman might find it convenient to carry the larger handkerchiefs of a man on a journey; had no doubt that the blockaded South no longer provided ladies' handkerchiefs; thought it likely that Hallie's father or brothers had supplied her out of their stock of linen. Yet he lost two good hours of sleep.

In the morning he was not a little ashamed of this performance. If ever guilelessness resided in a woman's eyes, those eyes were Hallie Tattersall's as she greeted him with a kiss almost wifely in its unconsciousness. The newness, the marvel, the sweet mystery of love were plainly working in her veins, like a potion from the mischievous hand of Queen Titania. She had been born again. Here was a man whose presence inspired her to sing, skip, caress, embrace; a man for whom she would also toil, endure, suffer, and, if need be, die. Rhett, looking at her, believed it thoroughly. Nevertheless, the sky was not quite as blue as on the day before.

That night, long after Absalom and Hallie had retired, he sat at his open window on the ground floor, smoking and thinking. The pale moonlight brooded the landscape like a beneficent spirit come to soothe and restore. An apple tree, white with bloom, sent waves of incense to his nostrils, and ever and anon, touched by a wandering zephyr's invisible hand, let a petal or two float to

the ground. Here, if anywhere in nature, were the very breath and essence of divinity. Yet the chorus of whippoorwills in an adjoining wood tinged the captain's thoughts with melancholy. Or was it the smoldering suspicion that his sweetheart had deceived him?

He was still wrestling with the question when his attention was invited to a more immediate and pressing matter. A man in Yankee uniform noiselessly crossed the lawn toward the house. Within thirty feet of Beaufort's window he halted, and stood like a statue for perhaps a minute—the personification of caution. Then he moved off to the left, and paused opposite Hallie's window. Still uncertain, apparently, he returned to his first station. Beaufort, revolver in hand, shrank to one side, out of sight.

Presently the prowler crept to within ten feet of the house, again halted, wiped his brow, and glanced nervously to right and left. Now, it chanced that Hallie had left her hat and gauntlets on the broad window sill of Beaufort's room, and at this moment the swaying curtain of Virginia creeper parted sufficiently to drop a patch of moonlight on these articles. The sight seemed to decide the man, for he advanced another step or two, quickly tossed an envelope through the window, and vanished.

After a prudent interval Rhett softly drew his curtain, lighted a lamp, and picked up the envelope. It bore no superscription, therefore was as much his as another's. Moreover, it proceeded from the enemy, and confiscation was his duty. Yet he instinctively associated the letter with the man's handkerchief about Hallie's hand, and his fingers trembled as he drew out the letter. It read:

DEAR MISS: I inclose the paper handed me yesterday by you, for it is doubtful if we can get back to our line. The Johnnies have cut us off. We lost five men this afternoon in a brush, and will probably have to surrender in the morning. Captain Cotes died at daylight. His last words were that he was glad it was he and not you who received the fatal bullet—that your services were of more value to our country than his. I hope your wound is causing no trouble.

There was no signature, but in the lower left-hand corner was written a name which made Beaufort cold about the heart—that of Violet Hazard, the famous Union spy who had once, with incredible audacity and finesse, obtained an audience with Jefferson Davis himself.

The inclosure was a tiny packet, thin, and scarcely an inch square, evidently designed to be easily concealed about one's person. It unfolded into a wrinkled sheet of "onion-skin" paper about a foot square. On it, in a hand as delicate and precise as a draftsman's, was a sketch of the defenses of Richmond and Petersburg, showing masked batteries, ammunition storehouses, general headquarters, and the disposition of troops.

Stunned, seeing, yet scarcely comprehending the cruel truth, Beaufort stared at the map with a dry throat, and a face as white as marble. At dawn he was still sitting in his chair. He saw Absalom leave his cabin, heard the whinny of horses. Later—how much later he had no idea—there came a tap at his door, and a cheery voice sang out:

"Breakfast in twenty minutes, Rhett!"

He shuddered. "Hallie," he called quietly, "come in!"

She entered. He saw her start at sight of his unused bed, saw her glance at the map upon the table, saw her stiffen as if touched by a live wire, saw her youth and freshness shrivel like a flower in a flame. But he, too, had suffered, and he felt no pity.

"Before judging you," he began, in a dead, impersonal voice, "I wish to make sure of the facts from your own mouth. You recognize this map?"

"Yes," she almost whispered.

"You made it when we were in Richmond?"

"Yes."

"You asked for my escort in order that you might have a better opportunity to examine the defenses there?"

"Yes—yes, Rhett."

"You have no invalid mother at Harper's Ferry?"

"No."

"You are the woman known as Violet Hazard?"

"Yes."

"Hallie Tattersall is also an alias?"

"No, my real name."

"Why did you use it?"

She passed her hand across her white face, as if unable to respond, but finally answered:

"Because I had never used it before, and it was as safe as any other, and because I thought I'd feel better to be called by my right name by a—by a gentleman who was serving me in good faith."

"Your ride day before yesterday was not for the purpose of getting me food, but for the purpose of delivering this map to Union scouts, should you chance to meet any?"

"Both."

"And the story you brought home was a lie?"

"Partly, and partly truth."

He was silent for a moment, unconscious that his white-knuckled fingers were breaking a lead pencil to bits.

"I believe that is all," he finally said.

"You may go."

"Go? Where, Rhett?"

"Anywhere out of my sight."

She swayed unsteadily.

"My sin is, then, that I love my country as you love yours?"

"I work in the open," he answered coldly.

"On information obtained by those who work in the dark, like me. You brave the bullet, I the halter. Why, Rhett!" She emitted a little, gasping, hysterical laugh. "Don't you see? Can't you understand? I—I tried—I wanted to tell you, before. But it wouldn't have

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"You made it when we were in Richmond?"

been fair to you. You would have had to betray either me or your country. Speak to me! Tell me you understand!"

"I have spoken."

"But, Rhett!" Again that piteous, gasping, incredulous little laugh. "You don't believe—you don't mean that I—that I don't love you!"

He made no answer. For a moment she gazed at him with wide, bewildered eyes. Then, reeling across the room, she sank to her knees by the side of his bed, and buried her face within the circle of her arms. At first she made no sound. But presently the room was filled with a long, low, shivering, eerie

wail, such as might escape a soul doomed to fly, batlike, throughout eternity, amid Gehenna gloom.

The man writhed. The chivalry of his race cried out against him. He knew that it was her love which had betrayed her. Yet her small hand had been mightier than ten thousand in laying his country low.

While he struggled with his warring emotions, he heard a body of horsemen sweep up the driveway, and an instant later there came upon the door a series of imperative blows, evidently delivered by the leaded butt of a whip. Thrusting his revolver into his belt, he strode out of the room.

"What is wanted?" he demanded of the ragged trooper at the threshold.

"Scuse me, cap," answered the intruder, suddenly civil at the unexpected sight of a Confederate officer's uniform. "But we're on the trail of a woman spy. We know she's in this neighborhood, and a nigger down the road told us a strange woman was stoppin' hyer."

"The only woman in this house is my wife," answered Beaufort steadily.

The trooper hesitated, and held a whispered consultation with his comrades.

"Cap, this woman is a she-devil—no less'n Vi Hazard. If we ketch her we'll hang her to the nearest tree. We can't take no chances on lettin' her escape. So we'll have to ask to see your wife. We know this Vi Hazard, because we come within an ace of ketchin' her day before yestiddy, failin' which we tried to shoot her. So, if you'll show us your wife, we'll be satisfied."

Beaufort's eyes narrowed.

"My friend, I'm not in the habit of exhibiting my wife. She has not risen yet, and the man that crosses the threshold of her room will die in his tracks."

A tense moment followed. In the dead silence Beaufort caught the slight rustle of a dress, and, shifting his glance for a fraction of a second, he saw Hallie standing in his doorway, pale, but otherwise composed. He knew what her presence meant. She had come to surrender rather than allow him to jeopardize his life. But he dared not order her back, or even to betray her presence by a sign.

The trooper spat reflectively. Duty prodded him from behind, but a desperate man opposed him in the fore. Then came a diversion in the shape of a horseman who had plainly been riding hard.

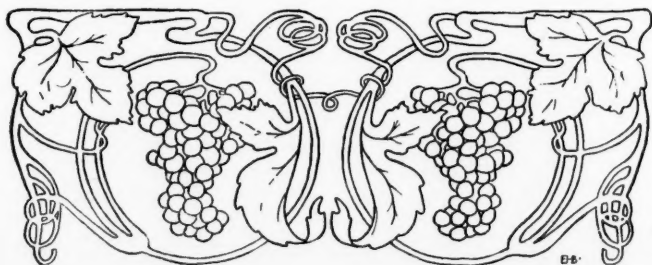
"Hey, you fellows!" he shouted, while afar off. "Gen'al Lee surrendered two days ago at Appomattox Courthouse. A cessation of hostilities is ordered, and all detachments will report to their command."

"A lie, I reckon!" exclaimed the wan, yellow-skinned soldier. "But under the circumstances, cap, I don't keer to shed your blood, er have you shed mine," he added, with a grin.

As the squadron trotted away, Beaufort closed the door, and turned to the waiting girl.

"Come!" said he, extending his arms. "The Confederacy is dead. We belong to the same country."

"And to the same household!" she whispered solemnly.





THANKS TO MISS SHEPARDSON

—BY—

EDWIN L. SABIN

Author of "Prexy's Niece," "The Feminine Principle," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

JUST what excuse, if any, except the excuse of not being invited, a youth at old Peterkin University could find for not joining Hot Tamale Tau frat, none of us who composed the bright and shining chapter galaxy could imagine. To represent high society, we could exhibit Biffy Robins, possessed of sixty-six—or so—neckties and the Chair of Socialettes on the *Daily Peterkin*. To represent athletics, we could exhibit a varsity pitcher, a substitute center, and a near pole vaulter. To represent solidity, we could exhibit Granny Whitten, senior law and future chief justice of the supreme bench of the United States, engaged now to marry a girl back home, and accustomed to call as man to man upon Prexy. To represent the common walks of life, we had the rest of us, and Smithie, who could make Phi Beta Kappa if he would study harder to stand in with the profs.

Hot Tamale Tau gave the swellest parties, that cost the most; had the best hold on the girls, the best grub, and the best house of any frat upon Peterkin premises. Now, all that we wanted was "Bully"—young "Bully" Moses, battering-ram half back—these were happy days before those hammering regulations against first-year players upon varsity teams—and popular idol. We were somewhat specialists in popular idle.

Bully had been examined as to pedigree and immediate family. It was understood that his father was defeated

for Congress, but had saved enough to buy a machine, and that there was a sister who seemed pretty; in a photograph, at least. So Bully was approved, and was asked. The spiking committee of Biffy, Granny, and I had done our nicest, the whole chapter had paid homage, and I, as the selected victim, had taken his mother, who didn't know football from calisthenics, to the one decisive battle of the year, between us and Overland. How was that for brotherly affection? How was that—when the first thing that she did was to ask me what those white lines were for?

However, Bully proved as coy as a city heiress. He appeared to like being asked; it and the adoration from all the frats grew upon him more and more until he sort of required that kind of stuff as a daily pick-me-up. Pretty soon he could quit training, after the football season, and then he could collect all those sundaes, ice creams, meals, et ceteras, which now he must postpone.

Disappointed and worried, we of Hot Tamale Tau sat in council of ways and means; Granny smoked his pipe, but the brows of the rest of us were corrugated in unseemly fashion.

"If those darned girls would only work him good and hard, I believe he'd join," vouchsafed sagely Buster Brown.

Buster, being our latest high-schooler, of course was wise on girls. He was at the age. But "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," you know; and it

was true that we had rather relied upon our fair friends to clinch the business.

If there was one thing upon which Hot Tamale Tau was entitled to pride itself, it was the sweet admiration we enjoyed from the girls. We had most of them hypnotized. We had a proprietary interest in the whole Gamma Gam chapter; their colors and ours were intertwined; they made our fudges; when they needed—er—masculine attire for their hen parties they borrowed ours; and we even lent them ideas for their initiations. We also owned portions of the Mu Mus and the Alpharettes, and all our pins were out constantly—some inconstantly. Yes, town girl and coed, they worshiped at the shrine of Hot Tamale Tau.

Loyal to the last degree, and pleased by the honor, for our sake, and for his also, the Gamma Gams had treated Bully as if he really were a Hot Tamale Tau; so had the Mu Mus and the Alpharettes. Biffy had taken him to call on all the best girls, including his—Biffy's—girl. I had taken him to call on all the best girls, including *my* girl. We all had taken him to call, carefully, wherever a Hot Tamale Tau pin gleamed as token upon shirt waist or chiffon bosom. And Granny had shown him *his* girl's picture with the Hot Tamale Tau pin gleaming upon *her* bosom.

Was he a fathead, with breast of adamant? Or was he going to be foolish enough to join the Zeta Zips? *A bas* the Zeta Zips! Could any human creature desire to descend so low as to affiliate with Zeta Zips?

"If those darned girls——" maundered Buster plaintively.

"He was calling on that Miss Shepardson last night," announced Smithie. "The Zeta Zips are rushing her to beat the band. She's wearing a Zeta pin."

Zounds! Here was something else to consider. We really never had paid much attention to Miss Shepardson. We knew the tendencies of each and every damsel in Peterkin as a Tammany committee knows its precinct voters; but Miss Shepardson had been out of the horizon.

She was a tall four-eye, with a severe countenance and a gallopy walk; a non-society girl, Y. W. C. A. secretary, and all that; and we had naturally relegated her to the plane of the general barb, and passed her up as useful, perhaps, but not ornamental or necessary.

"Yes, and he and she were walking around together this morning, after Dutch. They went up into the library to study," reported your humble servant.

"Well, we'll have to put the kibosh on that," decreed Granny, with the decision of a jurist. "If those Zeta Zips are rushing her, they're up to something."

Our blood boiled at the thought of darling Bully thus being roped in. We must wrench him loose from that Miss Shepardson right away. No fond mamma ever was more solicitous than we of Hot Tamale Tau. He was young, he was innocent; apparently he had not appreciated the pearls which we had thrown before him, in giving him entrée into the very best of Peterkin society. And now, to have him fall into the clutches of a non-frat four-eye! That was too bad. And 'ware the Zeta Zips bearing gifts. The combination of them, Miss Shepardson and Bully, was suspicious. It looked like a Zeta Zip scheme—a mean taking advantage of an unsophisticated freshman.

We immediately adjourned, to look for Bully and to inveigle him to the frat house, where under our wing—the loving wing of Hot Tamale Tau—he would be safer. Biffy and I finally ran across him in his room, which was occupied also by visiting contingents of Zeta Zips, Oh My Omicrons, Sigma Slugs, et cetera, and then some. While I engaged the enemy, Biffy contrived to convey to Bully that he, Bully, was anticipated by a score of eager hearts as a guest at Hot Tamale Tau quarters, for supper-dinner and the evening.

"Aw, I can't, Biffy," protested Bully. "I can't. I got to study, and after supper I got a date. Some other night."

"All right, old man," we assured.

As we gracefully backed out, smiles

of Zeta Zip, Oh My Omicron, Sigma Slug, et cetera, following us indicated to twain astute intellects that Zeta Zip, Oh My Omicron, Sigma Slug, et cetera, had likewise been turned down.

That evening, Bully actually had the nerve to trot Miss Shepardson out into public, and walk her past the frat house. A Zeta Zip and two Sigma Slugs were trailing along with them. So the Sigma

around for an evening of social intercourse she would not set the dog on them. This kind permission was only to be expected. Any girl would be proud to have Hot Tamale Tau sitting in her landlady's chairs; and one or two demonstrations by us would so fill the atmosphere with H. T. T. that the damsel thus bewildered would see for Bully nothing else worthy.



We purposely had come late and last, so that etiquette would demand the departure of the others first.

Slugs were on, too, were they? It was high time that Hot Tamale Tau sailed in and renovated matters. We might have to take Miss Shepardson also into the chapter, but we were bound to win Bully.

None of us ever had called at the Shepardson wigwam; but our Beau Brummel, gallant Biffy, who was in her botany section, made up sweetly to her, and with great speed ascertained that if he and his selected friends should drop

We called right away. Bully had been making himself scarcer and scarcer in human haunts outside of the classrooms. What he could find in Miss Shepardson passed our united comprehensions. However, who may foretell the intermediate stages which develop a freshman into a sophomore and junior? And Bully's education at home may have been old-fashioned.

Biffy wore a brand-new tie—his sixty-seventh or sixty-ninth—I wore



"Is this a waltz?" she queried. "Oh, I thought it was a two-step."

my other one, and Granny wore a black barrister bow and a cane. Thus attired, as duly accredited representatives, we sallied forth to show Miss Shepardson the real thing in gilded frats—the only real thing.

Biffy knew where she roomed; and when we arrived we found the soirée in full blast. Bully was there—the young cub!—so also were Zeta Zips, Oh My Omicrons, Sigma Slugs, et cetera, in great profusion. We purposely had come late and last, so that etiquette would demand the departure of the others first.

It is doubtful if that parlor ever before had held such an array of Peterkin society. It was an education in frats

to witness the gathering, and Miss Shepardson should have been flustered. But she wasn't. Her four eyes beamed placidly about upon us, as we sat on cushions, piano stools, and whatever other spare spots were available, preserving an *entente cordiale* as sweet as that of hungry dogs in a pound. Miss Shepardson was wearing a Sigma Slug pin now! The Sigma Slugs present seemed to emanate a smirky, triumphant air.

The *pièce de résistance* of the evening's dalliance was crokinole—that gentle pastime where you play quoits with your fingers by snapping. It is a vicious game, because it bruises your nails; and, aside from this irritation to the temper, it is too slow as a steady menu for Hot Tamale Tau. We prefer authors. However, to-night we cheerfully drew cards; we even fought for the privilege of sitting in, and any of us who was inspired to be excused while we smoked a cigarette—which is the act *fin de siècle* in top-notch of Peterkin society—resisted nobly.

Between, or amidst, shining at crokinole, and encouraging Shepardson smiles, and applauding Bully's freshman sallies, and sticking the hooks into frat opponents, we all passed a pleasant evening, and left together; and we of Hot Tamale Tau found ourselves not illy pleased, but exhausted, when as a bunch we wended homeward, leaving Bully to make his young adieux alone.

"That was awful!" groaned Granny.

"Yes. But did you see it?"

"What?"

"She's wearing a Sig pin!"

"I know it."

That incited us to endeavors renewed. We must plant the banner of Hot Tamale Tau upon yon bosom, where it would get in its good work; and after Bully's initiation it could be removed diplomatically but remorselessly. Of course, during his education onward and upward, Bully might be lending her his pin; but eventually he would prefer to crown the foolish and fair rather than the nice but not nifty.

This was the consensus of the chapter opinion; Miss Shepardson should be

honored by the loan of a Hot Tamale Tau pin. But whose? Not Granny's! Granny hooted at the idea of pulling up his pin by the roots. He would not let us have it even for an initiation! Transfer it from his girl to another girl? Shame on the thought! Not Biffy's; for Biffy's was bestowed upon the Pride of Peterkin—I forget her name—to hold her safe. If deprived of it, she would instantly be plastered with a Zeta Zip warming pan, or a Sigma Slug brass brooch, or an Oh My Omicron horse buckle, or other monstrosity of an insignium.

Not Smithie's, or Buster's, or any of the two dozen others; all were stuck hard and fast, it seemed, except the two dozen and oneth, which was mine. Mine was on just a girl who was a Hot Tamale Tau with or without, because her brother and father were H. T. T.'s. So her we sacrificed; and I sneaked the pin from her in order to have it "cleaned." You can almost always sneak a pin back that way—or to "use in an initiation." Therefore I must ruthlessly ask for my pin—she was awfully sweet about it—and loyalty was made subservient to ambition.

But before I had opportunity to attach it to the next appointed spot, a bombshell—another bombshell—burst upon us, in the announcement that the Zeta Zips were about to give a party at which Bully was to be the guest of honor again. He already had served all around, as much as he could while in training; and now that the season of football slaughter was over, he evidently had a balance due him. Immediately from various girls, our friends, came the word that Bully was to take Miss Shepardson; and, before the machinery of the gods got to working and we had our party planned, the Sigma Slugs and the Oh My Omicrons, et cetera, had engaged orchestras, and girls, and hall, and Bully, and he was some more to take Miss Shepardson.

That met approval. When we gave our party, with our feet upon the ruins of the fiascos by the others, we would mount higher. Out of civility we asked Bully whom he would like to bring.

"Miss Shepardson would be all right, wouldn't she?" he proposed, with proper diffidence. "She's an awful nice girl."

"Yes. Bring her along," we urged.

So he said that he would.

As Miss Shepardson was the key to the combination, we decided that this should be a Shepardson party. We selected a committee to study her, and find out what was her especial color scheme. She wasn't what you'd call a fond dresser; but the committee decided that in compliment to a long purple cloak she wore, and which made her a distinctive mark coming up the central walk, our party decorations should be purple.

This raised a horrible howl in soprano. The Gamma Gams vowed that purple would kill them and every other feminine participator; they didn't have a gown in their collection which matched purple. The Mu Mus were in despair, and the Alpharettes wept, and the Pride of Peterkin reproached Biffy so bitterly that he almost resigned from the chapter. But the die was cast. What were all these transitory objectors beside Miss Shepardson, Bully, and triumph! Yes, we even put into the discard Granny's poignant kick that *his* girl couldn't wear purple, and that her new dress was a green dress, anyway.

In view of the pains that we were taking, it seemed only legitimate that my pin should be at work.

"Look here, Bully," I addressed him affectionately, "as long as Miss Shepardson is coming to the party, she ought to be wearing a Hot Tamale Tau pin."

"She's wearing an Oh My Omicron pin now, though," informed Bully dubiously.

And so she was.

"You tell her to shed it, and stick this one on," I directed, passing him mine, which had been used to better days. "She ought to wear it for the party, at least."

"I'll give it to her," agreed Bully. "She hasn't had one yet, has she? She was saying the other night that she'd worn every pin now except a Tamale Tau."

"Well, we've been wanting her to

have a pin," I assured. "She can wear this until you join us, and then she can wear yours."

Bully flushed and grinned. I'd made a hit.

The party was a corker. Soaked each of us eight dollars and forty-nine cents, and so nearly skinned the treasury that, if we didn't initiate Bully pretty soon, and get his fee, the gas company was liable to catch us short and turn off our lights. But the party was a corker.

Yes, barring some ill temper, it was. Amid the purple lights, and the purple drapings, those girls who weren't spotted like varieties of tiger lilies presented the pleasantly inspiring aspect of pale-flitting *Lady Macbeths*. Each wondered if she looked as ghastly as the others. Only Miss Shepardson moved serene and happy, so delighted by the attention showered upon her. She was a very simple, childish thing.

The Hot Tamale Tau badge—that glorious shield betokening brotherly love—flashed resplendent from her front; and the youth and chivalry of Hot Tamale Tau clustered about her, eager for her favors. I managed to nab numbers six and fourteen, and second extra—all waltzes.

But dance? Dance? After we had struggled here and there, and must stop for mutual consultation, she chanced to watch feet as they shuffled past; and she cooed a little coo of astonishment.

"Is this a waltz?" she queried. "Oh, I thought it was a two-step."

Plainly Miss Shepardson was not an adept at the festive art of Miss—was she a miss?—Terpsichore; she shone more at crokinole. I had an idea that we were paired either for the gallop or the low hurdles. And as we disagreed, we concluded to sit it out—which was safer—safer for the noncombatants. We conversed.

"This is such a lovely party."

"Do you really think so?"

"Yes, indeed. And such lovely music."

"The music is good."

"And such lovely decorations."

"Quite unique—er—color scheme."

"I always did like blue."

"Purple?"

"Oh, no! This is blue. It is my favorite shade."

Horrors! Miss Shepardson was color blind.

"Oh, yes! Very fine! Hope Mr. Moses likes it."

But she wouldn't talk of Bully. She continued:

"Warm, isn't it?"

"I'll get you some ice water."

"Oh, no, thank you! I understand from our lectures in advanced physiology that the introduction of ice-cold liquid or other substance into the human stomach has a tendency seriously to impair the functions of the gastric follicles."

Miss Shepardson not only was color blind, but she was scientific. And still the band played "The Blue Danube," or other touching summons.

But here was another opening.

"Mr. Moses is in your section in psychology, I believe?"

"Is he? What lovely music!"

"Yes. We think a lot of Bully. Fine boy!"

"He seems quite popular. Is this shade of blue your fraternity color?"

"Er—yes. We think that he ought to make a good Tamale Tau."

"Oh, do you? It's a very pretty pin, isn't it?"

"So glad you think so."

"The Zeta Zip pin is so pretty, too."

"Ow!"

"I like the shape of the Oh My Omicron pin quite well. It has no sharp corners to catch on the dress."

"Ow!"

"The Sigma Slug pin is the most expensive, they say. It is made of such rich materials."

"Ow!"

"What lovely music!"

"So glad you like it."

"All the fraternities here give beautiful parties, don't they?"

"Yaas. How is Bully in the classroom? Good stabber?"

"Beg pardon?"

"Mr. Moses. Does he have his lessons all right?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. I suppose

so. Did you boys put up these blue decorations yourselves?"

We "boys" did not. But two strange, hired men did, and charged us thirteen dollars, and infuriated our very best girls, just to have her sit and talk of "blue"! And what were we getting out of it, besides, anyway? She prattled on:

"Warm, isn't it?"

"Shan't I get you a drink?"

"Oh, no, thank you. I wouldn't care for any. Ice water, or similar liquid or such——"

Then the music quit, and Biffy came hurrying over, to make certain that his next dance was with *her*; and, thank Heaven, it was, and I left him there while I wandered across and recuperated with the girl whom he had just left. She was a great solace. We talked Hot Tamale Tau and its glories, and Bully and his charms as a future frater, until the band struck up.

And as I blissfully floated about, with a Gamma Gam sister as the twin plane which supplemented to maintain our aeronautical equilibrium, ever and anon I watched Biffy pirouetting with Miss Shepardson. Pretty soon they ceased their experimenting, and sat. We gently wafted past.

"What lovely music!" was saying Miss Shepardson.

I knew the answer. The answer was "Boo!" The answer was "Boo!" while the heart would prate of Bully. Is there anything sadder than "It might have been"?

The next morning, being Saturday, after going to bed early we arose late, but with fire in our eye. In the ensuing meeting nobody had the chair, because all wanted to talk. Hot Tamale Tau was on the warpath.

"What I want to know is, did anybody discover that that Miss Shepard-



With Blackstonian brow and Websterian mien he addressed the forum.

son could dance anything that is danced at Peterkin?" demanded Biffy.

Nobody had.

"Did anybody discover that her conversation was a sort of ring-around-rosy?" demanded Granny.

Everybody had.

"Did anybody get a single, original observation out of her upon working Bully for us?" demanded Buster Brown.

Nobody did.

"Did anybody hear her speak of Zeta Zip pins, and Oh My Omicron pins, and Sigma Slug pins, comparing them with our pins; and their dances with our dances?" demanded I.

Everybody did.

"And," added Biffy, in awful tone, "did you fellows happen to be informed that the decorations were *blue*!"

Aye!

"Then, that being the case, this thing has gone far enough. We went to all the trouble and expense, and we didn't draw a darned trump. It's an outrage. Here we've launched into the very best society a girl who dances like a three-

legged cow, and talks like a one-record phonograph, and doesn't know blue from purple, and isn't even pretty. She's wearing a Hot Tamale Tau pin, too!"

"Well, I didn't offer it. You fellows made me," I retorted, sore.

"And she never offered to help us out," continued Biffy. "Now, I move that we send a committee around to ask Bully what he intends to do."

We did. It was the same old committee—Granny, Biffy, and I. We found Bully's lair well occupied, but not by him. Here were assembled three Zeta Zips, two Sigma Slugs, and two Oh My Omicrons, and the et cetera. We were greeted by a solemn silence. It was evident that all of us had something on our minds.

"Have a good party?" presently inquired Sigma Slug Jenkins politely.

"Sure," answered Biffy, with equal politeness.

"How do you like Miss Shepardson's dancing?"

Biffy's reply was awaited with intensity.

"She doesn't dance, does she?" answered Biffy.

The atmosphere was slightly shattered.

"And how do you like her conversation?" ventured Zeta Zip Morris.

More intensity.

"She doesn't converse. She repeats," answered Biffy.

The atmosphere was distinctly shattered.

"Smooth, though," invited Oh My Omicron Watts.

Grins.

"Bah!" repudiated Biffy.

The atmosphere all fell away in bits, and grins became chuckles. For a rare moment of mutual appreciation we were Greeks together, not separately. We had suffered.

Steps were heard. Bully, dear Bully, loadstone of our affections, briskly entered. At sight of the pan-Hellenic inquisition he paled; but he greeted us with his cheery "Hello!" and tossed his cap at the bed.

"Hello!" we responded accusingly; and silence that fairly echoed our thoughts waited for something to happen.

Our Granny rose forensically. With Blackstonian brow and Websterian mien he addressed the forum.

"I assume, your honors and fellow citizens," he said, "that we all are assembled for the one purpose; namely, to wit, that is, and as now or hereafter to be manifested by word, written instrument, or other token—to determine viva voce and directly whether the said prisoner, or accused, or subject of our sketch, has intention of joining, directly, at first hand, the said fraternities of Hot Tamale Tau, Zeta Zip, Oh My Omicron, Sigma Slug, any or all, or other Greek-letter society existent in Peterkin University, and which. Ahem!"

Mid complimentary applause, Granny readjusted himself. All eyes were upon Bully. He stood paler, but stanch.

"I say, fellows," he said, saying it, "you've been awfully good to me, and I appreciate it, and I don't know which I like the best, and I can't join any of you just yet, because I'm going to be an Upsilon Whoopsilon. You know Upsilon Whoopsilon, don't you?"

We didn't. Certainly not.

"But you know Miss Shepardson?" he pursued hopefully.

We did.

"May I inquire, what has—ah, Miss Shepardson got to do with it?" put in blandly Zeta Zip Morris.

"Oh, didn't you know? Her father's a Upsilon Whoop, and that's what got me to thinking about it. She says there's nothing like Upsilon Whoop, and we ought to have a chapter here; and now that she's been to all the parties, I guess she's a judge. If she hadn't been to all the parties, I might have thought different. But Upsilon Whoop has voted on our application, and a bunch of us are going to be initiated to-night."

Huh! Sorehead chapter! All right! With pity in our hearts and due solemnity upon our faces, we filed out, and dispersed along our several ways.

AIRDIS

—BY—
WINONA GODFREY

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF



FOR all her quandary, her perplexity, her quickening descent into that most dangerous of all moods—what's the use?—Kate could not but notice again the interested, the almost watchful eyes of the strange woman. For three days she had hovered about the waist department, wandering around the tables, for the sole purpose, it really seemed from her actions, of inspecting Kate.

Several attempts at conversation had been interrupted by customers. The floor men were beginning to suspect her of being a shoplifter. She was a middle-aged woman, neatly but cheaply dressed, with a face at once sad and hard, as of one who has toiled, and hoped, and striven to no purpose.

When Kate left the store that night, the strange woman was waiting on the edge of the sidewalk, and, to the girl's surprise, addressed her.

"Pardon me, may I have a few words with you?"

Her tone was quiet and well-bred; her gray eyes looked steadily into Kate's.

The girl doubtfully consented.

"Why, I guess so."

They moved on together, the woman putting questions which seemed as if they might have been prepared beforehand, and which the girl answered readily enough, partly because just now nothing seemed to matter greatly.

"Is your mother living?"

"No."

"Do you live by yourself?"

"Yes."

"Have you many friends in the city?"

"No."

"Are you likely to keep your place in the store indefinitely?"

"I lost it to-night."

"Ah!" exclaimed the woman. Her tone expressed a sort of incredulous pleasure, as if this was an unexpected but desirable event.

Kate, looking at her in surprise, laughed shortly.

"Well, it's rather serious to me."

They stopped on the corner.

"My dear, come and have some dinner with me. I want to tell you something. I want to make you a proposition." Then, as Kate hesitated: "At least, it can do no harm to hear it, and I—am not dangerous. Will you come?"

"Yes."

It was weariness rather than interest that brought consent. It was putting off the hour in which the dreary question of the future must be faced, and answered.

With few words, her odd companion piloted Kate into a small restaurant on a side street, led her to a little table in

a corner, and for a few moments devoted her attention to ordering a simple dinner. This done, she looked at the girl with a smile.

"You need not be afraid. I am exactly what I appear to be—a shabby, honest, hard-working woman, just at the point, however, where I might cease to be all three."

In spite of these ominous words, there was something kindly and infectious in her smile that moved Kate to return it.

know where my father is, and I don't much care. I've been working in department stores for five years, at from six to nine dollars a week. I'm a fair saleswoman, but I seem to have a talent for getting into trouble with the buyers and the floor men. Here at Southard's, it's the buyer. I'm canned. That's all."

The other nodded understandingly, as if she were quite able to supply connotations.

"There are lots of girls who can't get along in business. And beauty," she



"I don't need to-morrow. I—I'll do it."

"And you," continued the other, "are shabby, and honest, and hard-working, too—with an addition, pretty and tired. Will you tell me about yourself first?"

A sentence, heard somewhere, leaped into Kate's mind: "It is when girls are pretty and tired that they fall most readily into temptation." And with the bitterness of the year's privation, and loneliness, and humiliation stinging her soul, she felt her inner self, like many another desperate woman, crying cynically to the devil: "Tempt me!"

"That won't take very long," she said evenly. "I'm Kate Cressey, twenty-two years old. My mother is dead. I don't

reflected, "is only an asset in business when one isn't too proud to use it. Isn't that so?"

"I never thought of it just so before," Kate agreed, quite cool under the compliment, "but you've put it very pat."

"I'm not trying to flatter you, but—you are too proud to use it. Has that been the trouble?"

"Perhaps."

They began to eat their dinner.

"Have you any plans for the future?"

"No. I'm afraid to look at it, for fear it's going to be just like the past."

"It doesn't need to be like the past," slowly.

"I'm listening," said Kate.

Her companion ate for a moment in silence, then:

"It won't be necessary to make a book of it. My name's Baylor—Mrs. Alexandra Baylor. I've been a widow since I was your age—never wanted to try it again. And there was another reason. I had a stepbrother, got him yet. Steven Demming his name is, and a more high-handed, unreasonable, selfish beast of a man I never saw in my life. Yet he had a way with him, too. Well, he got married, wore his wife plumb out in a couple of years, and she died, and left a little girl. I was about the only handy person, so Steve brought her to me, and says: 'Alec, if you'll look out for the kid, I'll support you both.' He'd always been a money-maker, so I took the child and—I've never seen him since.

"I simply had to get in and dig. For fifteen years I worked like a slave to support that child, and raise her, and educate her right. I haven't got the knack of making money, and it was the skin of my hands that went to do it. We think the most of the things that cost us the most. That child was just my life. When she was eighteen years old she died."

"Oh!" murmured Kate.

Mrs. Baylor showed no emotion.

"It wasn't really necessary, either, if we'd had a little money. I've kind of drifted around since—don't seem to be good for much. I do a little sewing or most anything in one town a while, and then I go on somewhere else. Kind of a lady hobo, I guess." She smiled grimly.

Suddenly a deep fire flared up in her eyes; she struck the table a light blow with her clenched hand.

"And now, what do you think?" she cried, in a low voice that seemed to belong to another person, so vibrant with passion it was. "Two weeks ago I had a letter from Steve Demming, from Australia! He's rich—he's been rich for ten years. He says he's sick, and old, and he wants a home—and he

wants his daughter. God! But that's like him! *He wants his daughter!*"

As suddenly as it had flamed, the fire died. Mrs. Baylor took up her knife and fork. When she spoke again, it was in level tones.

"Not a word about why he'd never taken the trouble in all these twenty years to inquire into whether we lived or starved. That would have been a bother. But now—*now he wants his daughter!*"

Kate did not know what to say. As Mrs. Baylor had seemed to understand all the unsaid of her own story, so she felt almost poignantly the tragedy behind this simple tale.

"Well," said Kate presently, "what is—"

"He is going to have his daughter," said Mrs. Baylor.

"What do you mean?" breathed Kate, the color flying to her cheeks under the other's meaning gaze.

Mrs. Baylor pushed back her plate, and leaned forward.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking since I got Steve's letter. I'm going to be old, too, and I haven't got any money. You'd think I'd have some claim on Steve on my own account, but that's not his way. He might be generous if he took a notion, but he couldn't be just. He'd just blame me, and be mad. He owed his daughter a living, and since she isn't here, some other poor girl might as well have it."

"You mean——" faltered Kate.

"You've guessed it. What do you say?"

The girl caught her hands to her breast. Through her tired brain, dulled by a monotony of despair, there stole a vague promise of life, of change, like a gleam of dawn after the night. Still, like a surprised swimmer thrown into cold water, she was mentally gasping, unable to reason, obeying an involuntary instinct for mere living.

"You needn't decide now," said Mrs. Baylor, looking from the check into her shabby purse. "Come and see me tomorrow. But I've thought until my head aches, and I can't see any great wickedness in it. We'll be helped, and

who'll be hurt? We'll do the right thing by Steve, and where's the harm?"

She rose.

Kate rose, too, looking at her with wide eyes.

"I don't need to-morrow. I—I'll do it."

Mrs. Baylor caught her hand.

"You will! My dear! And you're very like her." She nodded her head slowly. "That's what attracted me first—there's something about you—yes, you're very like her."

For a second they looked as deep into each other's eyes as maid and lover.



"My girl!" he whispered.

"You haven't told me," breathed Kate, "her name."

"Her name was—Ardis," said Mrs. Baylor.

The very word thrilled through Kate's veins. It seemed as if from her first hearing it cast a spell upon her—of mystery, of dreams, of romance. Forever it held a charm for her, the enchantment of a personality, the sorcery of a love of love, of life, of youth, of a pagan joy in wind, and flower, and storm. She could not express this emotion so definitely; it was like feeling the secret of the dawn, and of the sea, and of the mountains, and not writing verse about it.

They came out of the dingy restaurant. Each felt a little spent, as if within something cried wearily: "No more now."

"Come and see me to-morrow," repeated Mrs. Baylor, giving her a street number.

"Yes," said Kate. Again they clasped hands. "Good night."

Kate went to bed soon after she reached her dreary little room. She did not toss in an agony of doubt and conflict. It was like a long journey begun. No matter what portended, she was on the way. It was settled. She was tired, and slept soundly.

The conspirators met the next day with a mutual curiosity, which shortly became a mutual satisfaction.

"The first thing," said Mrs. Baylor, "is to accustom yourself to the name. Steve heard it somewhere on his travels; he always seemed somehow fascinated by it. You must get used to hearing it."

She hesitated.

"Ardis," she said slowly. Suddenly the tears sprang to her hard eyes, her lips quivered. "Oh, my poor baby!"

A sob choked Kate—she made a gesture of appeal.

"Let me——" she began.

But it was already over.

"It was only for a moment," said this strange woman. "It will not happen again."

A second letter from Steven Demming had arrived that morning, containing a check for a large sum of money, and directing his daughter and her foster mother to meet him befittingly in San Francisco upon a certain date. He had been very ill, he said, but hoped that the voyage would benefit him, and that he would arrive in better health. He could hardly wait until the time came when he might see Ardis, his beautiful daughter. Apparently it did not occur to him that *his* daughter could be otherwise.

The weeks that followed were to Kate like one of those marvelous daydreams in which probably Cinderella indulged. She and Mrs. Baylor might well have been touched by a fairy wand, so different had their outward presentments become. It is not, however, likely that any fairy wand has half the magic of silk and velvet, of lace and fur and feathers, to make princesses.

The appointed day found them in San Francisco; Kate trembling with excitement, the older woman calm, cool, poised.

"Let me look at you, Ardis," she said.

She did look carefully; then, with one of her sudden movements, she kissed the girl affectionately.

"He doesn't deserve you," was her comment.

She surveyed her own elegance, too, in the mirror.

"I hope we've done it up right," she remarked dryly. "Steve was always great on style. On account of his money and his high-handed ways, I hear they call him King Steven out there."

Then they were waiting on the pier, the wind from the Golden Gate in their faces, and coming down the bay the great steamship that brought Steven Demming. Kate was conscious of no feeling save a singing in her ears, as she watched the docking of the vessel,

the passengers swarming off, the approach of two men.

Toward these Mrs. Baylor advanced. The elder seized her hand, and kissed her on the cheek, and——

"Here is Ardis," said Mrs. Baylor evenly, turning to the girl.

She stood a little apart, slim, and pale, and lovely, in silk, and ermine, and big hat; and there was something princesslike, too, in the aloof air of this shoppirl that more impressed this would-be king of men than if she had rushed to his arms.

He looked as if he had tasted all the wine, and kissed all the women, and sung all the songs in the world, and was weary unto death. As he gazed upon his daughter, the spent fire in his eyes leaped up again into surprise, and pride, and eagerness; he took her tenderly into his arms.

"My girl!" he whispered.

For a moment Kate lay upon his breast. A curious numbness was upon her. She seemed to neither see, hear, nor feel; was rather a vaguely conscious automaton moving by machinery.

Still holding her hand, Demming turned to the younger man, and bade him approach. Assuredly the old eagle had an imperial air.

"Condress," he said, "I want to present you to my sister, Mrs. Baylor, and—to my daughter Ardis."

Bareheaded, Condress released Mrs. Baylor's cordial hand for Kate's, but the conventional words upon his lips were not repeated. He looked into her eyes in silence, and his hand as it left hers dropped heavily to his side.

Suddenly Kate felt the earth falling, falling away beneath her feet. For a second she whirled in blank space; then as quickly she was once more Kate herself. They were moving toward the waiting automobile, her arm in Demming's.

Now, in the reign of King Steven, life befitting the princess, his daughter, proceeded upon its gorgeous way. From being utterly neglected and forgotten, he set this daughter upon a pedestal, decreeing that all nonworshippers be denied the light of his coun-

tenance. He bought a great house—had servants, horses, automobiles, all the modern rest of it. All for Ardis. Wonder of wonders, that word was oftener upon his lips than capital "I."

"Aunt Alec's" bank account was unlimited because Ardis loved her. Condress remained the king's prime minister because Ardis expressed no wish to see him supplanted.

Instead of being the sick tyrant his stepsister had expected, Demming appeared to forget his illness and his tyranny in this new, strange, almost tremulous devotion to his long-lost Ardis. Aunt Alec's eyes were hard and bright when she looked at the two. What unwished but sweet revenge to one who lay in her grave! The irony of it brought a sneer to the woman's lips, and tears to her eyes.

As for the girl, as her beauty grew in the flesh from all this grooming—she who had gone hungry—it seemed to gain, too, some quality of mystery, of sadness, of unrest, that made its charm irresistible.

One evening Demming had a recurrence of his old attacks, and Condress, upon leaving him, found Kate alone on the veranda.

"He is better?" she asked quickly.

"Yes. But—I suppose you know he is likely to go at any time in one of these spells."

She nodded. Then, giving his concerned face a curious look, spoke hesitatingly:

"Tell me, you—are you very fond of—my father?"

"Why, yes, I think I am."

"Please be quite frank with me, Mr. Condress. I—I really wish to know what you think of him."

He, too, appeared to hesitate.

"I will be quite frank with you, Miss Demming," after a moment. "I do like your father. He took me when I was little more than a boy, and I've followed his fortunes ever since. I owe him a great deal, and I—at once respect and despise him. Do I offend you?"

"No. Go on."

"Demming is a great man in his way. And, like many great men, he is an

egotist and a tyrant—and something of a mystery." He paused reflectively. "And you?" in a low voice.

She was startled.

"I?"

"What do you think of him?"

The color rose in her cheeks, and ebbed quickly.

"Why do you ask?" she evaded.

"You must see my—interest in you. I have dared to wonder, Miss Demming, what your life was before—last year. Though I have been with your father daily for ten years, until six months ago I did not know of your existence."

A little sound escaped her.

"That was very strange."

"And I know him too well not to know what that silence meant. Yet now you seem to have twined yourself around his heart as no one else ever did."

She did not reply.

"May I—tell you something?"

She inclined her head, not looking at him.

"From the first time I heard it, your name has had a fascination for me. That strange name—Ardis." He lingered upon the word. "I felt it could belong to no commonplace personality. It seemed to lay a spell upon me—a charm of something young, and sad, and wise, and ardent."

She trembled.

"And now that you have seen me"—her voice broke a little—"you see that I am quite different."

"No. I see that you are just that; that the name was made for you; that you are just—Ardis."

She was silent.

"No young girl who has always known luxury looks at life as you do," he went on presently. "That is why I wonder what that life was—before, when I did not know you."

"Do you really wish to know?"

"Yes."

"Well, I was earning my living in shops some of the time. The rest—oh, I prefer not to think about it!"

He started to speak, but checked himself.

"I see it is useless to try to deceive you, Mr. Condress," she cried bitterly. "My father calls me princess now, but I am a princess who has been hungry, who has little education, who picked up her fine manners by observing the ladies she served!"

Frightened at her own outburst, she shrank back as the young man took an impulsive step toward her.

"And your father—
But your aunt, Mrs. Baylor, where was she?" he asked tensely.

Kate laughed hysterically.

"Oh, we—we were both down on our luck then, Mr. Condress. But please—please don't ask me any more to-night. I'm tired—I—"

With a fierce little gesture, Condress caught her hands to his lips. For a second she swayed, like a lily in the night wind; then tore from his grasp, and fled into the house.

In her own room, she threw herself down by the open window, breathless, with a wildly beating heart. Did Condress guess? No, no, surely not. But he loved her—that dear knowledge, at least, this night's travail had brought. Or did he love her? Did he love Kate



"You're so easy to look at," he added whimsically.

or Ardis? The Ardis of dreams or Kate in the flesh?

"No, no!" she cried desperately to the stars. "I never was poor, cold, reckless Kate. I'm always Ardis. I've always been Ardis, that you love, Van!"

It must be that that other Ardis was expressed in her, too. So much she had thought of her, and always tenderly, not as a usurper at all—almost as if the other Ardis were some sweet inner quality of her own being. The name had a music for her ears; it seemed to be calling to all that was pure, and tender, and wistfully impassioned in the depths of her.

There was a tap on the door. Kate knew it.

"Come!" she called unsteadily, and Mrs. Baylor entered.

"What, in the dark?"

She switched on the lights, discovering with grave eyes the slight figure in its crushed white dress—shining eyes, tumbled hair, flushed cheeks.

"Is anything the matter?" anxiously.

"Is anything the matter?" repeated Kate whimsically. "No, nothing's the matter, Aunt Alec. I'm simply sitting here in the midst of my great adventure."

"Steven's not well. He wants you."

The girl rose languidly.

"Very well. I'll go."

Aunt Alec scrutinized her.

"Are you—getting tired of your great adventure?"

"That's a pretty name for—imposture, isn't it?"

"Hush! It won't be long now. And—Steven has made his will. Everything to you."

Kate put her finger tips to her temples.

"I'm—not thinking about that. I want to be—honest."

Aunt Alec sighed.

"My dear! Well, go to him now."

Demming, in a dressing gown, was sitting in a big chair by the window. The lights were shaded so that the room was in a sort of twilight. Condress was standing by the table, but Kate did not look at him as she crossed to Demming's side.

"Can I do anything for you, father?"

The word fell naturally from her lips. After all, she felt more of kinship with this selfish conqueror of wildernesses than with the parents she had known so little.

"No, I'm all right now—only tired. Sit here by me. You're so easy to look at," he added whimsically, as she sat on a footstool beside him, leaning against the arm of his chair.

"I always loved pretty girls," he continued lightly. "And if I'd had my girl made to order she couldn't be more to my taste! What hair to tangle a man's

heart in! What eyes to drown in! And what a mouth! Eh, Condress?"

He laughed teasingly as the young man turned away abruptly, making some inarticulate sound in reply.

"And so my name's Ardis," said the girl, in a cool, grave voice.

Demming started; his face changed, and set into sternness. He looked at her a moment in silence.

"You were named for—a girl I used to know—a long time ago, when I was a boy. Not your mother, my dear. It seems to me as if you were somehow like her. Or perhaps—" He paused a long time. "I should have had you with me before," he continued sharply, in a different tone.

She only smiled faintly. He frowned.

"Do you know French?"

"No."

"Do you know music, riding—er—drawing—those things?" rather vaguely.

"No, father," calmly.

He had never troubled to inquire into "those things" before. He rubbed his chin thoughtfully a moment, then his face cleared.

"Well, neither do I, and in Australia I am called King Steven! Besides, it is not yet too late to learn them, is it, princess?"

He put his finger under her chin to turn her face toward him.

"Perhaps not," indifferently.

The frown came back to his forehead.

She was indifferent because she was thinking of other things. She loved, and to love so carries with it the desire to be better, and purer, and more worthy the beloved. She wished to cleanse her heart of its secret. She longed to bow her head upon this old man's knees and whisper: "I am not Ardis, the princess, the beautiful, the beloved, except in my heart. I am only Kate."

He felt her tremble, saw the wistfulness in her eyes that besought forgiveness.

"You're pale," he cried anxiously. "Here, Condress, take her out into the air a while. It's close to-night."

"No, no!" she protested. "I'm all right, really."

But Demming, as usual, must have his way, and she must perforce let Condress lead her out on the veranda.

So dim, and cool, and quiet it was out here under the calm stars, she felt her heart must burst to be so near and yet so far from peace.

Condress took her in his arms.

"What is it, my little love?" he whispered. "What troubles you? I've seen it so long, because I love you, maybe. Can't you tell me?"

She lay very still, like a tired child.

"Can't you tell me?"

"No."

"Aren't you going to be my wife?"

"I don't know."

"Ardis!"

The name pierced her. She pushed him away.

"Yes, yes," she panted. "I'm going to tell you, Van. I want to be honest. It's just that—that! I'm not Ardis! I'm not Ardis!"

"Not Ardis!" he cried. "Why, what do you mean?"

She spoke hurriedly.

"Listen. I'm not Ardis—she's dead. I'm Kate Cressey. Aunt Alec—Mrs. Baylor—found me. We were both poor—and she hated *him* for that other girl's sake. Oh, don't you understand?"

"My poor girl! Of course I understand. But, oh, good Lord, what a mess! What a mess!"

They stared at each other.

"And now what shall I do? What's to be done?" she besought him, clasping her hands.

"What's to be done? That's it," he echoed. "It's been hurting you all this time, my poor child, hasn't it? But if you tell Demming now, it will kill him sure. Nobody's harmed, and yet—"

She was happy to shift her burden; to be able to lean her weariness upon his fresh strength. She listened almost in peace to his rehearsal of all her own self-arguments—arriving nowhere, as she had always done.

"Let's wait a little," he said at last. "And we must tell Aunt Alec that I know. Don't be unhappy about it, Ardis."

"You're going to forgive me for not being Ardis?" she sighed.

"You'll always be Ardis to me," he said.

As they entered the hall, the tall figure of Demming's man came toward them.

"Mr. Demming would like to see you a moment, Miss Ardis." He hesitated. "I think—he is not so well."

Demming lay upon his bed. The room was dim and still, and there seemed about the quiet figure something of that unearthliness that falls at last upon the earthliest of men.

"Ardis." He smiled as Kate dropped upon her knees beside him.

"Father," she began to falter.

"I followed you," he half whispered. "I thought—I'm always anxious about you. And—I heard."

"Oh!" cried Kate.

She buried her face in the bed-clothes. She felt his hand smoothing her hair with an infinite tenderness.

"It's all right," he murmured. "You're always Ardis to me—the only one I've ever known."

"Oh, let me tell you," sobbed Kate.

"It's all right, my girl," he repeated softly. "Take her away now, Condress. I'm glad she's yours. To-morrow we'll talk. I'm tired to-night—but happy. To-morrow—" His voice fell wearily.

Condress led her away.



THE COUNTRY GUEST



HILDEGARDE LAVENDER

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

WHEN the death of Launcelot's Great-uncle Hiram placed my husband and me in the possession of a modest establishment in the country, we allowed our grief at the avuncular loss to be tempered by the thought that at last we should be able to give free rein to our hospitable instincts.

We are the friendliest of created beings, and the apartment life in the city to which we had been condemned for the half decade of our married life had sadly tried our expansive souls. What, we asked ourselves when Great-uncle Hiram's seasonable demise—he had lived to be ninety-three among his Connecticut hills—made landed proprietors of us, were dinners, and luncheons, and chafing-dish suppers, and afternoon teas as opportunities for real intercourse or as expressions of cordial friendship? Puff—that for them! Hereafter we should entertain in truth; hereafter we should be able to offer our friends something worth while.

The very first part of Great-uncle Hiram's plain old farmhouse which we undertook to improve was the wing we

designed for guest rooms. Guest rooms—in the plural, if you please! How swollen with pride and importance we felt—we, one of whom had always been obliged to sleep upon the sitting-room couch whenever any irrepressible but misguided friendliness or fondness had induced us to put up a guest overnight.

"One doesn't really know one's friends in town," declared Launcelot oracularly. "There's no chance for a true interchange of ideas. All men handle their knives and forks, and even their dinner-table conversation, in pretty much the same fashion. You never break through the conventional shell, and get down to the real human being it incloses. But up there—it will be different. There will be leisure for real talk; there'll be revelations of real personality; you'll see John in the morning before breakfast, and Louise in a brambly blackberry patch. You'll know them as their families know them—more or less. You'll have true intimacies, deep comradeships; not these touch-and-go relationships of the city."

I have since wondered exactly why we expected the intimate revelations of

country-house life to be more satisfactory than the casual cordiality of the city. After all, it is not without meaning that cousins almost invariably avoid one another's company, that nieces are shy of their aunts' society, and uncles hold harsh views concerning their nephews' intellectual and moral worth.

But this is written at the end of the illuminating season, and after I have carefully made out my list of those whom I shall never, never again invite to Hardhack Hill. I do not mean that we have made a relentless black list, name by name, but only type by type, characteristic by characteristic.

In the first place, there's the Woman-on-a-Diet. Of course, I knew even in town—who does not?—that that lady was a bore, but never until we had established her, her dress-suit case, and her valise in the pretty, little, dormer-windowed, yellow-cretonned, white-dimitted room of our hearts, did I begin to dream how great a bore she could be in a country house.

"My dear," she said, when I had introduced her to the apartment aforesaid, and was about to leave her, with the countrywoman's favorite banality about fresh-air appetites and the near approach of the dinner hour, "my dear, may I trouble you to have a little pitcher of hot water and a lemon sent up to me? I'm reducing, and I drink a pint two hours after meals. I'm afraid," with a worried frown at her watch, "that I'm a little late to-day. What an awkward time that afternoon train leaves the city!"

I apologized for the train schedule, and went forth to order the hot water.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Brander," called the Woman-on-a-Diet dulcetly after me. "Did you say that dinner would be in half an hour? You won't think it a perfectly dreadful imposition if I ask you not to have it for an hour, will you? My regimen does not permit me to eat for an hour after drinking the hot water; two hours is really better. But, of course, the journey has upset everything for to-day."

I apologized for having forced the journey upon her, and went down to put

dinner off a half hour. The cook and the waitress greeted the order with lowering brows, and I remembered that the hired man had agreed that evening to alleviate the awful loneliness of country life for them by taking them to the band concert in the village. I apologized to the cook, waitress, and hired man.

Launcelot, who had been working in the kitchen garden, and who had, accordingly, the appetite of a plowboy, came down from exchanging his gardener's clothes for the habiliments of civilization, and demanded his dinner. I apologized to Launcelot.

But if you imagine that when the guest finally did consent to appear at the festive board, we were able to forget the delay, and to devote ourselves to our food with proper thankfulness, you have been mercifully spared acquaintance with any example of the Woman-on-a-Diet class.

"No soup, thank you," she said, in a low, patient, grieved tone, as Emmy endeavored to place in front of her a cream-of-spinach soup, of which the whole family was justly proud; Launcelot because he had planted the spinach, I because I had evolved the recipe from two others, and Nora because she had made it. Woman-on-a-Diet looked forgivingly toward me when she declined this product of our joint labors.

"I don't eat cream soups at all," she explained. "Very seldom any soups, but never anything but a perfectly clear meat broth."

I apologized for the soup.

It is unnecessary to particularize all the things which Woman-on-a-Diet did not eat. They included all the products of our garden and of our dairy. Vegetables, butter? She closed her eyes faintly at the very thought. Cream? She shuddered. Cheese? Heavens, of course not! Salad? Well, if we could arrange to give her a leaf of lettuce dressed without oil, and a bit of cucumber similarly innocuous, she might try those. And could she trouble us for a bit of bread which was quite dry and stale? Those little brown-bread sandwiches looked quite delicious, but she never touched moist bread.

We satisfied our appetites apologetically, and as furtively as possible.

"When is that woman going home?" Launcelot asked me, in the seclusion of my room that night. He spoke as if her presence were due to me, and me alone, whereas she was an old friend of his family's, and had been invited at his express solicitation. I murmured that she was going home on the Monday morning train, whereat he scowled, and counted, "Saturday—Sunday," in the tone of one who contemplates dreary eternities of punishment.

"For Heaven's sake, have some one who can eat next week," he adjured me. "Have a man—a man with a healthy, hearty appetite, a man who is too old to care whether he preserves his waistline or not, or one who's too young to realize the danger of losing it!"

Our list of friends boasted at least two such agreeable individuals, and I invited one of them for the following week-end. I also invited Miss Prue, whom, in the depths of my guileful mind, I had long regarded as just the person for the Man-with-the-Appetite. Somehow, I had never been able to bring about a meeting between them in town, for Miss Prue lived quietly in the suburbs, and could seldom be prevailed upon to accept evening invitations, while the Man-with-the-Appetite naturally had leisure for no others.

They came up on the same train, and on the drive to Hardhack Hill they got on swimmingly. They exclaimed appropriately over the changes we had made in the house, and they admired the vegetable and flower gardens, and each other. She evidently thought him a fine, wholesome example of masculinity, which he was, and he evidently thought her a charmingly cultivated and agreeable woman, which she was.

Until after dinner. At that meal Launcelot fairly beamed, they gave such hearty tribute of voice and appetite to all our garden stuff, and to our milk, cream, eggs, and butter, in the various forms in which they were served. But after dinner!

It was moonlight and warm. Miss Prue wanted to wander along the roadside and in the garden. This refined and gentle taste was gratified for a while. But the Man—with-the-Appetite grew restive. It was very pretty, he said—very; and the honeysuckle certainly did smell sweet, but, "By Jove, Lance," he said to my husband, as though the idea had just occurred to him, "we're exactly a quartet. Let us have some bridge before bedtime."

And then we recalled the mastering passion of the Man-with-the-Appetite. We said properly that that would be a pleasant thing, and then I asked Miss Prue if she played.

"I do not," said Miss Prue decisively.



"I could not think of playing. I regard it"—her manner was vibrant with feeling—"as wrong."

"Oh, never mind that," cried the Man-with-the-Appetite reassuringly. "You'll pick it up in no time. You play whist, of course?"

"I do not play any games of chance," said Miss Prudence coldly.

"Chance?" snorted the Man-with-the-Appetite. "Why, I'm sure Mr. and Mrs. Brander here would never allow a game for more than half-cent points. Would you?" And he turned to us.

"Oh, no stakes at all," I said hastily.

"Even then," remarked Miss Prudence, in the voice of one who has been called to bear witness to righteousness, "I could not think of playing. I regard it"—her manner was vibrant with feeling—"as *wrong*."

"Oh, in that case," murmured our other guest.

But his brow was clouded. Poor Miss Prue also looked unhappy.

After we had spent a wretched evening together, automatically admiring the moon every five minutes, and commenting on the honeysuckle in between, I accompanied her to her room.

"I'm sorry," she told me, kissing me good night. "I'm sorry to be obliged to be disagreeable. But I'm sorrier to know that you, too, waste time, and interest, and energy on cards! I should not be doing right if I pretended to ignore it."

Saturday and Sunday it rained. The whist fiend's condition was so pitiable that I had to ignore Miss Prudence's scruples, and make up a dummy bridge set. He looked at me with the gratitude of a man whose life has been saved. Miss Prue retired to the study, and, rather ostentatiously, I thought, read "The Simple Life," which platitudinous volume the Woman-on-a-Diet had left with us the week before, as a protest against the complexities of our menus, I suppose.

"I have so little time for solid reading," explained Miss Prue, with a meaning glance toward us at the card table.

"That was a beautiful combination you effected," said Launcelot to me, with withering sarcasm, when Sunday had dragged its leaden hours to a close. "Will you try, next time, not to have

the Last-Possessor-of-the-Puritan-Conscience extant here at the same time with an ordinary man? Indeed, if you've got any more specimens of that almost-extinct class on your list, would you mind having them in the middle of the week, when I'm in town?"

I apologized to Launcelot, and put down upon my black list, below the Woman-on-a-Diet, the Woman-with-a-Conscience and the Man-with-a-Hobby. But, as Launcelot had so hopefully remarked when Great-uncle Hiram's legacy had befallen us, one never really knows people until one has spent intimate days with them in the country.

I did not dream how many there would be on that list.

There was our friend the decorator, for example. In town, when she came to dine with us, or to call upon me, or to play bridge, she was like any other well-bred and agreeable person. Sometimes I have suspected her of finding our landlord's taste in mantelshelves a little crude, but I myself have occasionally been smitten with the same opinion, so that I could not blame her. Sometimes, too, I have caught a fleeting expression upon her face which seemed to denote regret that I insisted upon keeping mother's furniture of the mid-Victorian, black-walnut, curlicue-line period, but she always refrained from open speech on the subject. But in the country!

"Of course you're not going to let this paper remain on the walls when you get around to doing them over?" she said, when she looked about the living room. "An old-fashioned tapestry landscape paper would be charming, don't you think? Or perhaps a soft, restful shade of green—green's been overdone, of course, but, after all, there's no better background—and it will set off your red mahogany pieces perfectly."

Humbly I explained that the bright-flowered paper to which she had taken professional exception represented, not Great-uncle Hiram's taste in the matter of wall hangings, but Launcelot's and mine.

She shook her head sadly.

"You'll weary of it very soon, I'm

afraid," she said gently. "You'll want something cooler, more restful. Don't you find this—er—tiring?"

I explained the unsensitiveness of my optic nerves, and ventured the opinion that in the country one spent too little time indoors to be seriously disturbed in one's æsthetic appreciations by a little bright color. As for green, I told her that Launcelot had flatly balked at that refined hue. She smiled half pityingly, half tolerantly, wholly superiorly.

"You'll come to something less—er—garish," she informed me hopefully.

I looked across my flower garden, riotously unrefined with glowing hollyhocks, with bright larkspur, with gaudy dahlias, to the roadside blaze of tangled gold and purple, and I took a good deal of credit to myself for not mentioning to her that the country standard of rest-

fulness seemed to me quite a different thing from the city one.

She suggested what sort of curtains we should use to replace those which waved before our many-paned windows; she had views on floor coverings and bedroom decorations.

"Will you kindly explain to your friend," said Launcelot to me, at the close of her second evening, "that this is a house people live in? It isn't a half-tone reproduction of a set of rooms by the Sheraton-Grand-Rapids-and-Sixth-Avenue-Company? Tell her that I don't care a tinker's—blessing—whether sideboards postdate Chippendale or not, or whether the bureau in my room is certainly not earlier than eighteen-thirty, while the bedstead is pure Colonial. Tell her it's enough for me that the drawers of the former work

without dislocating my shoulders, and that the latter has accommodated itself to a hair mattress without disaster. Tell her I use 'em to keep my clothes in, and to sleep in, and not to pose for a furniture dealer's ad. Would you mind doing that?"

"You'd think," I replied resentfully—the decorator is my friend—"that she was the only person who made any suggestions about your house and its decorations. As a matter of fact, no one has crossed the threshold who hasn't told you how to do it over—only she really knows what she's talking about. But everybody who comes up for a day makes suggestions."

"True," conceded my husband readily. "There seems to be something about a friend's country place which unloosens all the decorative fancies of every visitor. But that woman does it with such an air of patronizing authority."

It was not long before we discovered that not only did all the world possess estab-



"Don't you find this—er—tiring?"



He would demand that the horse be stopped in the middle of hills, while he went to search for some dusty-looking treasure we had passed.

lished ideas on the adornment of farmhouse rooms, but that most of it was equally well-equipped with agricultural theories. I believe that, at heart, most men consider themselves farmers, as most women certainly consider themselves furnishers. Adam, the tiller of the soil, and father of them all, crops out most surprisingly in one's masculine acquaintances.

"Why don't you raise mushrooms?" demanded one—who, being a painter, felt perfectly competent to give advice on any bucolic topic—to Launcelot. "You could make money on mushrooms. See what they sell for. You can raise 'em anywhere. What's that? No market? Oh, nonsense! There aren't half enough mushrooms shipped to New York. You aren't here long enough each week to attend to it? Well, why don't you get a good man to keep on the place all the time?"

I looked out, expecting to see Launcelot rise up, and, forgetful of every sacred rule of hospitality, smite the guest who dared advise him in that off-

hand manner to "get a good man." Poor Launcelot! Whose adventures with all brands of hired men, except competent ones, would fill a large volume, and had quite depleted his bank account.

But my husband restrained the murderous impulses he must have felt, and merely growled, with that frankness which men seem to cultivate:

"Aw, go on! You don't know what you're talking about!"

Similarly he disposed of the man—a broker—who was quite sure that we were missing fortune by not raising squabs, and the physician who had a fixed idea which, in another, he would have described as a manifestation of mania, to the effect that handsome competencies were to be had from groves of hickory trees. The lady who thought that he would do well to abandon his profession, his town dwelling, his city affiliations generally, and, building a hothouse on the south side of our farmhouse, proceed to raise violets, he turned over to me for annihilation. The

musician who scornfully bade him cease his beloved pottering in the kitchen garden and take to raising sheep, he retorted upon bitterly by sudden advice on the composition of oratorios.

But, after all, if we should blacklist all who made helpful suggestions concerning our house and farm, we should live in a splendid isolation in the country. Every man and woman has inherited enough of the after-Eden spirit of our first ancestors to be utterly unable to refrain from having some pet delusions concerning the way even our week-end agriculture should be practiced.

I notice that when we visit country friends, Launcelot and I have to padlock our lips to keep from counsel ourselves. He is always convinced that another type of dairy barn or another type of dairy cow would be an improvement upon the estates, large or small, of his friends, while I am full of wisdom on the subject of perennials.

Even without this numerically large class, the black list attains striking proportions. There are the men and the women who decide on Friday that the following Saturday and Sunday for which they are engaged to one may be more advantageously occupied by them, and who never telegraph of their deep disappointment until just too late to save you the trip to the station. There are the ones—generally women—who are using your three-day invitation to Connecticut as a stop-gap between Rhode Island and New Jersey, and who, on what should be the morning of their departure, receive letters which cause them cheerfully to request you to “put them up a few days longer,” with bland disregard of the fact that your aunt and Launcelot’s cousin are even then arriving, and that you need their rooms.

“Most of the black list is feminine, isn’t it?” said Launcelot.

He smiled pleasantly. Occasionally he displays that masculine sense of humor which discerns exquisite mirth in the occasional gibe at Woman.

“Do you remember the professor?” I asked.

The smile faded from Launcelot’s

face. That professor in town is such a pleasant, theater-going, bridge-playing, conversation-making friend. In the country he is a botanist pure and simple. We would walk, calling his attention to our noble views, in which we took proprietary pride. He would never raise his eyes from the wayside grasses, but would grunt in answer to us, and would then pounce upon a thread of grass, which he would proceed to try to make us see with the eye of science. Then it would be our turn to grunt. Driving, he would study the edges of the road, utter quick, sharp cries, demand that the horses be stopped in the middle of hills, while he went to search for some dusty-looking treasure we had passed, and which only the microscopic eye could perceive at all. If we set out upon an eight-mile tramp to the river and back, we usually made about three miles, and returned harassed with much looking at infinitesimal bits of vegetation. If we set forth upon a long drive we made a proportionately short one.

And we know now that the professor has said of us: “It is marvelous that people can live in the midst of such wonders, and be so blind to them.”

“Oh, well,” said Launcelot, when he had balanced the professor against the feminine guests on the black list, “he’s only one—or, at any rate, he doesn’t count for more than three or four!”

And then I felled him to the earth by recalling his friend with a temperament, his friend who tramped down his young oats because he was so “drunk with the divine air,” his friend who never appeared at any meal within three-quarters of an hour of its stated time, alleging that “time was made for slaves,” and that he had been too happy lying on his back in the woods to think of luncheon, or too absorbed inviting his soul by the brook to remember dinner, his friend who invited a plague of flies by removing the humble utilitarian screen from his windows so that he might enjoy “God’s good air” unstrained.

“You are right,” says Launcelot handsomely, when he has drunk deep of remembrance of this guest, “there is no sex in boredom.”

SISTER STRATTON AND ETERNAL YOUTH



BY
R. O'GRADY

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

IT began in our town about two generations before my grandfather was born, and I came pretty near bein' alive at the finish. Whether it was right or wrong is, I s'pose, a matter of opinion. Though the queerest thing about the whole thing is that a mortal could live so unnach'ral long, even for the sake of spiting a church.

When Deacon Stratton died and made that will, his widow was to have the use of the prop'ty long's she lived—the house and ground, and enough of the int'rest to pay her necessary expenses—and when she died, everything was to go to the church; the house was to be moved off, and a new stun' edifice built on the lot. While she survived, she was to use the house, as the will said, "for dwelling purposes." She was to use the premises, I put it in the exact legal phras'ology—for cultivatin' the necessities of life, and she was restricted to keepin' certain kinds and quantities of live stock, such as hens, pigs, one cow, six ducks, a limited num-

ber of rabbits, white mice, and canaries; she wa'n't to keep guinea fowls, ganders, mules or goats, or anything of a "vicious or voracious nature." And she was to use "all vegetable, animal, or mineral products of the place for home consumption, and not for commercial purposes; the proceeds of the surplus of said products to be added to the church fund."

Now, I say, any man that's so drawed up with the puckerin' string of meanness that, on the bare chanct of deliverin' his own soul from the stokin' department of the hereafter, he'll leave his wife harnessed with sech a tangle of lawyer' phras'ology, and give the church the drivin' seat— Well, it's plain robbery, that's what it is, when it stands to reason the woman earnt the biggest half of that prop'ty with her own hands.

Besides, it was like puttin' the old lady in the county house. If she was "by one jot or tittle"—them was the words; I guess they're script'ral and

legal, too—to vil'ate the least ioter of the pervisions of the will, the prop'ty was to revert to the church, immediate, whether she was livin' or dead when she committed said vil'ation. Consequence was, the widow was elected to spend her declinin' years with her brethren and sistern of the church actin' as spies on her daily occupations; countin' her ducks, weighin' her butter, invoicin' her vegetable garden, and limitin' her rabbits and white mice.

She was a mild-eyed and gentle old lady, till she heard the readin' of the will. That seemed to ossify her, flesh and feelin'.

But bimeby there come a dispute between her and the brethren 'bout her givin' away garden sass to some needy neighbors. It come nach'ral to her to be kind-hearted, and I don't believe at first she had any calc'lations of cheatin' the will. However, when the church brought up the subject, she claimed it wa'n't for commercial purposes she gave the stuff away, but for home consumption, just as the legal phras'ology said.

But the brethren, they claimed what she gave away was "surplus products." There they was, pitched for a fight on legal technercalities, in which kind of battle them that's had the measles when they was babies, and keeps vaccinated, and don't get pneumony, and is descended from a long-lived race, usually comes out ahead.

This seemed to wake the mild little woman up to the possibilities of the last will and testement of her deceased husband. She began to ask the neighbors, specially them that didn't have much of their own, to eat at her house every day or so.

"Ain't that home consumption?" she asks, with a smile that turns up good and sharp at the corners. And the church people went back home to think 'bout it.

Meanwhile Sister Stratton was havin' a lively social time doin' her good works, and lookin' younger every day of her life. Like as not it was that, more'n any hankerin' for spite, that put the idea in her head of livin' forever.

Soon's the church people heard 'bout it, though, they begun—from the minister down—to criticizin' the old lady's unholy and uncharitable sentiments. That was what the minister called it. His wife pronounced her a "stingy and unregenerate old thing," and the epithets applied to her by the less sanctified members of the church is better left to the imagination.

These opinions got to the old lady's ears quick and easy. Some of the brethren and sistern remonstrated with her in person for temptin' Providence. They was afraid she'd bring down an earthquake, or something, on the town.

The deacon's widow didn't say much at the time. She just used that smile that twirled up at the corners. Her lifelong experience with the deacon, I guess, had trained her for a woman of few words. She don't say much, but meantime she does a deal of fixin'. She goes to the store and buys flummery, and has a sewin' woman come to the house. And the next Sunday she prances into meetin', wearin' a gray silk-velvet bunnit with lavender flowers, and a shawl, and other riggin's to match. She was bright-eyed and pink-cheeked—part from the excitement of bein' dressed up, I s'pose—and when she whips into church that way, there's a gasp of holy horror all over the house, from pulpit down.

"W'y, S-s-sister S-s-stratton!" explodes the first of the sistern to git to her after the benediction, takin' in the outfit with a blighted stare. "And you not out of mournin' yet for your sainted husband!"

"Ain't I?" questions Sister Stratton, lookin' down at herself, and smoothin' her gray silk-velvit bunnit ties, cheerful.

That's the brief way she answered all personal criticisms that was brought against her, and they wa'n't few nor mild. Because, by blossomin' out in such decent attire, she fla'nted the red rag of her sinfulness in the face of the church, so to speak. But Sister Stratton kept ca'm, and didn't argy.

She didn't need to; for though her husband's dyin' eyes had seemed to

pierce the veil of eternity, they hadn't penetrated far enough to foresee the casualty of his wife ever wantin' any new togs, and he' had forgot to limit her wardrobe in the will. Consequently her best black bunnit that she had wore to church every Sunday since her thirtieth birthday, she scuffed out for prayer-meetin' nights and market-in'; her second-best bunnit, which had formerly sufficed for prayer meetin's and revivals, she now used for makin' the white mice a winter nest.

Every three or four years after that, Sister Stratton would rig herself up in a whole new outfit, till by the time ten years or so had passed, she was pervided with as many changes, I guess, as a circus lady. She had lavender, and purple, and iv'ry, and all them shades that neat but dressy old ladies wear, and ev'ry time she came struttin' down the aisle in one of her new uniforms, a audible groan went up in Israel.

Sister Stratton seemed to be as happy as anything, spite of the fact that with all her fixin' her clothes and givin' to the poor, there was an income from



Maybe those brethren and sistern wa'n't righteously indignant.

"surplus products" every year to increase the fund for the new church.

But after a while, it begun to pall on her. I guess there's got to be some fresh int'rest in life to make livin' forever attractive. A body needs a little love to ease him along; it ain't in human natur' to face an eternity of existence on this earth, with the prospect of fightin' and bluffin' your way clear through.

When Sister Stratton had paralyzed all the saints and most of the sinners in town about fifty times by her doin's, and had begun on the fifty-first lap, she 'peared to lose zest. Occasionally her



The first of April, she arrived.

pew would be empty at church service, and when she did go, she wouldn't spin along as she always used to, like she'd just been wound up.

No, she was slower, and kind of thoughtful, as if she realized she was livin' on stolen time. However, when they crowded 'round her after church, to ask about her heath—they always did them days, for she was quite a piece past ninety—she would bring out that smile, which was gettin' a little worn from overuse, and say crisp:

"Quite well, thank ye, quite well!"

Always it was the same, "Quite well!" She never could be decoyed into complainin' of a crick or a cramp. Even when she took to her chair for the most part, she wouldn't admit of an ailment. Along about this time, the

brethren were doing what they pleased with her vegetable garden and her orchard, and the sistern were milkin' her cow, and allowin' her two quarts of milk a day, which was ample, of course, for her uses.

She stuck to her chair, and brooded, and her face got pale and set. The weaker she seemed to grow, the more they tried to do for her, flockin' around with the dutiful relish of a small boy that's workin' for the visible and luscious reward of a ripe plum.

Just when they was ready to report with confidence that the old lady couldn't last more'n two or three months at the farthest, she hops up one day, and announces that she wasn't ailin', but just meditatin', and if they'd all go home and come back to-morrow, she'd tell them what she'd thought out.

Of course, they surmised she was goin' to let them begin buildin' the church right away.

"You would be wise, sister," says the minister, "to lay the foundations of your own and Brother Stratton's magnificent monument while your mortal eyes, though dimmed, are permitted to gaze upon it."

As soon as she'd got rid of the church people, she called in the neighbors, and had them cook up a good

supper. Then they worked for her half the night. When the sintern that looked after her came back the next day, she had two trunks packed and a valise, and she was all trigged out in her gray dress with the lavender bunnit.

"I've heard of a fountain of eternal youth," announces she, "and I'm goin' to drink it. I may be gone away three months, maybe more, but——"

Then she drops her smile, and informs them cool and businesslike that there wa'n't no clause in the will to limit a leave of absence.

Sure enough! There was another place the old man's prophesyin' eyes needed a field glass. Or else he was so busy regulatin' her home life for the period of her "survival," as the will called it, he never stopped to think she might up and take a vacation in the flesh.

Maybe those brethren and sintern wa'n't righteously indignant. But they couldn't help it. The little old woman locked up her house, and went away on the train, takin' a starter of white mice in her reticule.

When she'd been gone a year, folks begun to think that that fountain of youth she'd discovered was the Niagara, it took her so long to drink it. But in about six months more, on the first of March, the brother that was lookin' out for her place got a note through the mail. It was written in a steady and healthy-lookin' hand, and it said:

Please save all the duck eggs from now on, I'll need them for setting. Will be home next month.

SOPHIA STRATTON.

The first of April, she arrived. And if the whole Mississippi River had represented eternal youth liquerfied, and she had gulped it dry, I guess she couldn't have looked much younger and youthfuller for a woman of her age. She'd about touched the century mark then, you know. She wa'n't but a little fatter, 'cause she wore the same gray dress she went away in. It was just that she was lively, and peart, and bright-eyed, as she ever used to be. She'd got her three-cornered smile back, only some of them claimed the expression was diff'rent. But I guess

they couldn't tell, any more'n they could pick out the original white mice from the squirmen' nestful she carried back in her reticule.

She lit into it first thing, and opened the house, and aired out, and set two hens, and put some garden seeds to soak. But before she'd "got through," as the women say about their morning work, she was havin' callers. All the middle-aged and elderly women in town, especially the single ones, was comin' to see her.

It wa'n't so much to welcome her back as to find out the partic'lars about that fountain of youth. Nobody wanted to speak before the others; so they'd wait till she went into the kitchen to make tea or something, and the quickest one would dart out after her.

Toward supper time, a bunch of them had been settin' so long they'd got desp'rate, I guess. When she stepped out to see what the rooster was cacklin' about, two of 'em darted at once. In the kitchen door, their heads come together with a crack like a split air bag. The way those two women called names, then, couldn't be mistaken for apologizin'.

I guess Sister Stratton begun to think she'd have to rig up the woodshed for a private consultin' office, and put up a sign. But she finally settled it by promisin' to give a talk on the subject in prayer meetin' that night, and sent them all home.

When the preacher saw folks pourin' into prayer meetin' before the first bell had rung, it gave him a start; he thought a calamity was toward. But they all seemed so expectant, and so anxious for front seats, he pretty soon begun to congratulate himself that his inspired sermon of the previous Sunday had borne fruit in a special wave of conviction.

It was noticeable for a congregation of middle-aged and elderly seekers—something that had never happened before in that town, or any other that he knew of. And—a circumstance that must have made the preacher sure the movement was deep and lastin'—there were as many men as women.

The minister, risin' to his great opportunity, read related chapters from seven diff'rent places in the Old Testament, and clinched 'em with about eleven in the New. Then his comments got started, and kept unwindin' and unwindin' like a ball of yarn down a rat hole.

Everybody thought no one else was ever goin' to get a chance to speak. Several of the men nearest the door slunk out to take the air, and a row of lady teachers up front squirmed, and twisted, and whispered, and finally begun to cast concerted glances at the preacher. He shut his Bible pretty soon, though I don't s'pose he knew what ailed him.

At fifteen minutes past nine, he called on the saints to witness, and he set down. Everybody looked at Sister Stratton, and of course she had to speak.

In some ways, it wa'n't anything remarkable that she had to tell. She began in a timid voice, which waxed up firm and clear before she got through. And she said in substance that the chief instruments in preventin' old age was to treat the members of your own household fair and lovin', be kind to the unfortunate, and not hold a grudge to anybody.

By the time she reached this p'int in her instructions, you could heard that audience snort as one man; or p'r'aps, "one woman" would be a more correct figger, as the ladies seemed to lead off.

But she continued.

"However," said she, "the specific fountain of youth which I have drunk, I am under bounden duty not to reveal." You ought to seen that audience stick out its eyes then. "Until," she continues, "I myself have passed away. A full statement of the secret will be left in fit hands, to be made known when I am gone."

She set down, and simultaneous, as if Sister Stratton's movement had sprung the lid, one of the lady teachers in front popped up like a jack-in-the-box. She was pretty tall, and slim in some parts of her figger, and she had

taught in the grammar room forty years.

"False premises!" she almost shrieks. "I rise to ask: How can a person that's going to live forever reveal a secret after she's dead?"

The minister was steppin' from behind the sacred desk with protestin' hands uplifted, but Sister Stratton, who was quick, anticerpated him.

"I didn't mean to state," says she, "that I'm worthy to live through all eternity in the body; my weakness can only hope to 'proximate life everlastin' on this earth, and I'll doubtless make room for all that's settin' here to-night. However, I trust some of them that inherits the secret"—she looked 'round with that quirkin' smile of hers—"if they keep sweet and patient, will outlast old Methuselah a thousand years."

She set down, and sech a groan as went up in Israel that night! It was a sort of mongrel groan, augmented by the Hittites, the Amorites, and all the other "ites," so to speak, for every sect in town was represented, even to the infidels and doctors.

The church people nach'ally were cast down by the prospect of waitin' for their prop'ty another century or so, and those youth chasers, some of them, couldn't hope to hold out very much longer, to say nothin' about cultivatin' patience and sweetness in arid ground for an indefinite number of years.

My sympathy surely would have been with Sister Stratton—to think of the combine of hostilities she'd got to buck against in that town. In time, such a feelin' in the air would wear out the sensibilities of a mule, and a soft-hided cherub like Eternal Youth wouldn't have any show at all.

But Sister Stratton pegged away for a good many years, cultivatin' her little patch, takin' care of her little fruit orchard, and improvin' her hens. She hunted up all the poor people in town, and helped them in small ways, givin' them garden seeds and patches of ground to work for themselves, and she always had a house full of company.

It seemed, too, like she'd got a diff'rent disposition since she'd been

away. She didn't act a particle more sassy, and yet the church people couldn't seem to nose 'round and weigh her butter and count her white mice like they used to do. She was firmer.

But, as I said, a grudge in the wind is some like water on a stone, and I guess, in time, it would make a dint in an immortal angel. When Sister Stratton, at about the age of a hundred and fifteen, as near as folks could reckon it, begun to show signs of frazzlin' out again, some of the brethren and sistern were for rallyin' around her, as before, and cheerin' her departin' days with their support and approval. This was only the younger and more unsophister-cated ones. Those who'd been through it twenty years before said she was just settin' down to figger out another scheme. So everybody let her alone.

Sister Stratton wa'n't poorly enough to need waitin' on, and when, one morning, it rumored about town that she was dead, folks took the news like a village that hears a rival town has been knocked sky west by a cyclone, or something; they went around in that sort of half-doubtful joy and sorrow, not waitin' to waste either emotion if it wa'n't so.

Only one faction was too desp'rate to pause for doubts; them was the youth chasers that had survived the mem'ra-ble prayer meetin' of about seventeen years before, and others that had since joined the ranks.

There wa'n't any partic'lars yet; Sister Stratton's curtains had been down



He walks up with solemn authority, and tries the door.

for about two days, and nobody stirrin' out of the house. No sooner was the report started that she had died in her bed, or something like that, than the youth seekers begun to line up, from the front door down to the walk and out into the street.

It was business hours, otherwise the men would have been in line, too. Of course, the women were respectful and reverent, standin' out there, but I guess there wa'n't one of them but what was plannin', when that door was opened, to make a break for it, and try to get the receipt.

Pretty soon the old gray-headed minister, who'd exulted in his prime over Brother Stratton's will, came marchin' along with a bunch of deacons. He walks up with solemn authority, and tries the door. It wa'n't locked!

I guess them women felt sold, but they didn't stop to think about it then. Goin' in the house, they were right on the heels of the deacons, and there were about seven women to each heel.

If you'll believe it, there was never anything emptier than that house full of people. They poured in until they filled the parlor, and overflowed into all the other rooms, and yet the house seemed empty—terrible empty. The furniture was there, bare and empty; the white-mice cage and a few pitiful, clingin' hairs, and straws, and grain hulls—empty. Sister Stratton herself had disappeared, and left no mortal remains.

Of course, the women would all jump at the conclusion she had been translated, and they were more'n ever eager for that receipt.

The minister saw it first. A white envelope was stuck under a glass sugar bowl settin' on the table.

He held it up in his shakin' hand. "Brethren and sisters," he demanded, "shall I break the seal?"

There was nothin' else to do. He opened it, and took out a sheet of paper and another sealed envelope.

"Shall I read the message?" he again demanded.

The brethren assented, though the sistern, who were in the foreground, looked as if they'd ruther read it to themselves.

So the minister lifted up his old voice, and read. The note began right in the middle of things, and sounded more like a conundrum than common sense. It said:

I was to stay here till I died, but I'm going back to spend my last days where there are none but friendly feelings, even if to die in poverty.

When you tear down the house, please keep a good lookout for white mice; a pair

of them got away yesterday, and they're nesting under the kitchen. I hope you will be careful to save all you can. My aunt's revelation is in the other envelope.

CATHERINE PAMELA WINKS.

Almost before the pastor got through pronouncin' the unfamiliar name that was signed to this note, it was took up and repeated by every soul present, in a murmurous exclamation that sounded like an army of rusty windmills playin' just a little out of time.

But there was the sealed envelope yet, and those women, gaspin' on the very verge of eternal youth, ca'med down to listen.

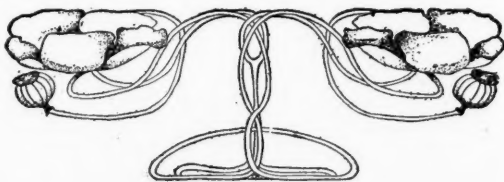
The pastor broke the seal, takin' out another sheet of paper, and read:

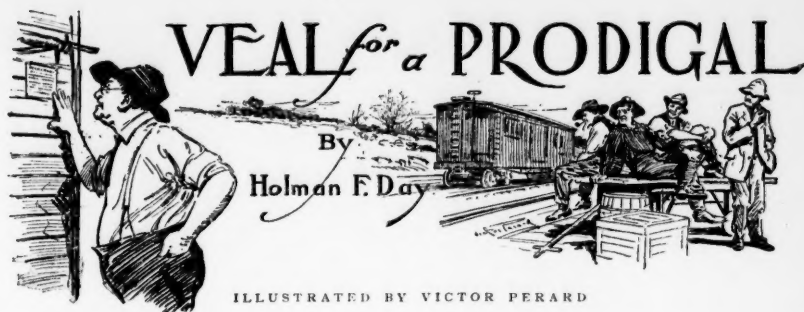
BRETHREN AND SISTERS OF THE CHURCH: All my life that I was laboring, and scrimping, and saving, I was comforted by the belief that I'd have, over and above the church's rightful share of our property, something to leave to support the declining years of my sister's only child. You know how this hope was disappointed. But since the greatest work of the church in the world is to do good to the poor and helpless, I ask your forgiveness for this deception. God has forgiven me; and my sainted husband's magnificent monument will last for centuries after all who read this have passed away. My niece is only working out my dying request. Respect her remains. She has been kind to them that are poorer than herself. These years I have been with her in spirit, which is the only way to find the secret of immortality.

SOPHIA STRATTON.

When the aged pastor had finished reading this living message from a long-dead member of his flock, his voice was hardly above a whisper. He bowed his gray head. The brethren bowed theirs. The seekers of eternal youth filed slowly out the door, and down the path.

I guess—I hope, maybe—some of 'em had looked in their own hearts, and discovered the fountain already there.





ABOUT fifteen minutes before train number nineteen-seven was due at Scotaze Station, old Moody, the agent, came out of his little pen of an office, and tacked up a sheet of paper under the signal-flag brackets.

"That's the best I know what to do with it," he proclaimed, for all bystanders who chose to listen. "Help yourselves, gents."

The regular station loungers are always down at Scotaze depot in good season.

On settees and the baggage truck were a dozen or so. Only one man arose when Moody made his announcement. The other loungers gazed after him when he ambled toward the posted notice. They had the air of being willing to take his word for it.

This investigator was Zebulon Groves. He stood before the paper, and poked first one glass of his spectacles, then the other, into his mouth, and polished them with a corner of his handkerchief. He read with great attention, "plipping" his lips as he pronounced the words to himself.

"Say, gents," he cried, as he finished, "I reckon you'd better come over here and read this piece of news for yourself. You'll never take my word for it."

When loafers have the curiosity of elderly men with little to occupy their attention, a hint of that kind usually fetches them. They came in a bunch, and read this:

On Board Train Nineteen-seven, Nov. 25.

To STATION AGENT, Scotaze:

Announce I shall arrive three-fifteen to-

day. Prodigal returns from far country to pay whatsoever he oweth, principal and interest. Come one, come all.

EMLIN STICKNEY.

The homing prodigal would have been disappointed had he been there to see the effect of his bulletin. There was no enthusiastic acclaim. The assembled citizens of Scotaze looked at each other.

"What do any of you make out of that?" inquired Iral Lancaster.

"Oh, I figure it this way," stated old Moody, who had waited after tacking up the telegram. "Let Em Stickney step off a train in Scotaze without some such guarantee in advance of him, and he'd get licked before he got his mouth open; and when you know what kind of a mouth he's got that's getting licked mighty quick."

"Pay whatsoever he oweth, principal and interest," quoted Blake Wormell, in meditative tones. "What's the interest on twenty-six dollars for seventeen years?"

"He don't say whether it's simple or compound. Seeing that everything is outlawed, and he can't be made to pay, he'll probably offer simple," said Eckwith Doughty, blinking his pale eyes at the writing on the wall. "And there's probably a ketch of some sort to it at that. Em Stickney never engineered anything there wasn't a ketch to!"

"Give a man a show if he's trying to do right," interposed Wormell. "Wait till he gets here and see. Maybe he's going to make it compound. Lend me a pencil, somebody."

The tip of one protruded from

Doughty's vest pocket, and Wormell pecked at it with thumb and forefinger. Doughty clapped his hand over the pocket, and pulled away.

"Borrow of some one else. The train's 'most here, and there'll be excitement, and you'll forget to give it to me again." He turned his back on the telegram, and started toward a settee. "Whether it's compound or simple, it don't interest me," he said. "He never stuck me like he did the rest of you."

"You bet he never did, nor anybody else ever did," growled Wormell, "for

there's no brass band out," said Groves, tucking his spectacles back into the case. "Em is sensational enough to expect us to have one—but we'll wait and see!"

So they were waiting when nineteen-seven grated to its stop at Scotaze village.

It was a Saturday afternoon, Scotaze's shopping day at the shire, and many women alighted. They came slowly, their arms heaped with bundles. To the indignant astonishment of several of these heavily laden housewives their husbands on the station platform



He suddenly threw his arms wide, and bellowed: "My old townsmen."

every dollar you ever got hold of is cemented into your meanness so devilish hard you couldn't start it out with a diamond drill."

But he spoke that cautiously behind Doughty's back, for when even a mean man is known to have fifty thousand dollars out on mortgages, one hesitates to spit in the face of such prosperity.

"Folks who do a lot of talking ahead are sorry sometimes," affirmed Stote Bradbury, getting into position near the edge of the platform, for the distant hoot of the whistle signaled the train. "He went off owing me. Now let's wait and see!"

"We ain't committing ourselves—

paid no attention to them, whatever. The men of Scotaze were looking over their womenfolks' heads, in search of the real prize package of the day. It appeared! It was Emlin Stickney, seventeen years gone from Scotaze—there was no mistaking him. There never was another mustache like his in those parts—a down-hanging mat of black hair, with ends thrusting to his coat collar like walrus tusks.

He pushed impatiently past the last of the bundle-burdened women, elbowed his way among those who sought to shake hands with him, climbed upon a baggage truck, and stood revealed to them, a paunchy man of middle age, on

whose expansive front hung certain evidences of prosperity.

He folded his arms and waited in silence until the train pulled out, and the assembled citizens of Scotaze thus had an opportunity to examine these visible tokens of success. From his watch chain dangled many lumps of metal which were unmistakably gold nuggets. A nugget as big as a damson plum formed a most opulent centerpiece for his necktie. The nearest of the bystanders decided that even his waistcoat buttons were of gold.

He stood, gazing over their heads into vacancy, until the noise of the departing train had died away.

His former townsmen stood patiently at attention during this wait. They were expecting something worth while. They weren't looking for him to pull his pocketbook there and then, and settle. No, that wasn't the idea. They were waiting for oratory. Oratory had been Emlin Stickney's long suit ever since his voice had changed from falsetto to the deepest bass that ever joggled rostrum chairs. He had always been forensic, even when he talked with neighbors at the street corners.

Now he suddenly threw his arms wide, and bellowed: "My old townsmen."

He paused, his eyes, under brows which would have been adequate mustaches for the ordinary man, searching their faces.

"The prodigal has returned from a far country. He awoke one day, and he remembered the land of his birth. He was not among the husks and the swine when he awoke. Ah, no, fellow townsmen. The prodigal had been blessed in that far country. He awoke in repentance, that's where he awoke. And the sense of his sins pressed upon him. He had been recreant to the friends of his youth. Oh, cursed is he who cannot return in peace and prosperity, and in all honor, and set his foot upon his native heath, and say: 'Ye rocks and rills, I'm with thee once again.'"

The speaker paused, and wiped his mustaches away from his lips with a silk handkerchief.

There was a bit of a stir on the outskirts of the throng on the station platform.

Two men had clattered up in a beach wagon. They were Cap'n Aaron Sproul and Hiram Look, on a quest for certain express matter consigned to them.

Hiram thrust into the edge of the crowd, the cap'n at his heels, and overheard the last words of the introduction.

"Who is that old steam calliope?" inquired Hiram of the nearest man, who was Eckwith Doughty.

"Don't you—didn't you ever hear of Emlin Stickney?" ejaculated Doughty. "Oh, I forgot that you and the cap'n ain't been settled here in town but a few years. Well, Emlin Stickney——"

But here Mr. Stickney resumed, and when he talked others were obliged to listen:

"Oh, when that sense of desolateness strikes one in a far country, fellow townsmen, that feeling that one may not walk up the streets of home, and grasp his old neighbors by the hand, and behold the kindly smile of welcome, and hear the honest hail of greeting, then all the treasures of the world seem mean, and gold has lost its glitter. So then the prodigal arose, and girded his loins, and came out of that far country. And he's here! I ask you if the swift-winged messenger of the lightning bore my message ahead?"

Nodding heads assured him.

"What does that toot mean, reduced to words?" inquired Hiram of Doughty.

The latter pointed to the posted telegram, and Hiram elbowed his way to it, and perused it, with Cap'n Sproul's chin over his shoulder.

"Confession is good for the soul," resumed the prodigal. "But restitution is better. Behold, I said to myself: 'Lo, I will return to the scenes of my youth, and to where I sinned against them who loved me. I will set an example to the world.' This world is too full of human greed and deceit. We hear daily of those who flee and leave their debts behind them. The newspapers spread such tidings with ghoulisn glee. But do you read where prodigals return, and

pay to each and all that of which each and all have been despoiled? No. But I'm here to set an example. I'm going to show to the world that it pays to be honest. The lightning flash has swept across the skies, and told you the truth. I'm here to refund. Principal and interest, every cent!

"I know what my fellow townsmen will say to me then. I feel the thrill of it already. For every dollar I lay down tenfold will be returned to me in love, and honor, and self-respect, and peace of soul—man's dearest possessions. Then let the newspapers spread that news to the uttermost corners of the globe, and let the lesson sink deep into the hearts of other men, and incite them to do likewise; and thus, from the example of Emlin Stickney, shall the world be made better, and all men be made to come into their own again."

"Say," commented Hiram, sotto voce, "I hope he doesn't forget and spoil all this by inviting them to step inside the tent, and view the wonders of nature collected at great expense from all quarters of the inhabitable globe, and so forth. For if that old geyser ain't been earnin' twenty a week spoutin' for a hootchie-cootchie show, then I'm a piker."

"I tell you that's Emlin Stickney," insisted Doughty, "and he never barked for any side show, not while there's a sucker been left in the world. He's found easier money."

"I don't believe in passin' out any such talk when a man has come back home to square himself," interposed Lycurgus Snell. "If the Apostle Peter dropped into Scotaze some day there's folks who'd make faces behind his back. If you can't say good, better not say anything."

The mumbled conversation on the crowd's outskirts did not reach the ears of the prodigal.

"You have read my message, you have heard my proclamation," he went on. "I shall now proceed to tread the hills and dales of my old town. I shall move among you. I shall hunt out my obligations to the uttermost penny. And on the appointed day, to one and all,

shall restitution be made. That day will be announced in due time."

A voice was raised. It was Blake Wormell's.

"There's been some discussion, Em, whether it's goin' to be simple or compound interest."

"Compound!" shouted Stickney, in his best orotund. "Compound—and something on top of that. This is to be a settling day that the wide world will make note of."

"I'll meet you halfway on it," stated Wormell. "You needn't bother to finger interest on mine. I'll throw it all off. I'll set a little example in generosity of my own. You hand me twenty-six dollars now, and we'll call it square."

This display of indecent haste was not received kindly by the crowd, which had already fallen under the sway of Stickney's eloquence. There were growls of disgust, and murmurs of rebuke here and there.

"Ah, I see the right spirit is abroad here, and prompts the majority," belowered the prodigal. "I have not come *sneaking* back here to pay my debts. I shall not draw each man aside and slip cash into his hand. I shall make my act an example for the world to look at. I want it to be known of all men. It shall be done in one grand climax, so that the sound of it shall go reverberating in the ears of the world."

Wormell, disappointed and cowed by the frowns of those in the front ranks, where he had posted himself, went filter-
ing back to the outskirts.

"Em Stickney never did anything yet without a street parade and a brass band," he observed rancorously to Hiram. "He's got to be sensational, or he won't play. Somebody had better advise him to go up in a balloon, and throw twenty-dollar gold pieces down on the town. Maybe he hasn't thought of that scheme."

The prodigal was off once more in his harangue, explaining why the world needed such an example as his to wake up other prodigals who had money to pay, but did not realize what happiness there would be in paying.

"Look here," said Hiram, pulling the



"It's this way," stated Hiram breezily. "You two ought to know each other."

malcontent off to one side, "what about this old gas bag, anyway? The cap and I, here, never heard of him."

"Well, he's Em Stickney. That don't mean such a great lot to you, bein' strangers to him," explained Wormell, "but it's a dictionary word that means 'skin-gamer' so far's Scotaze is concerned. About seventeen years ago he got up a patent dinkus that he called a horizontal windmill, greased the thing with gab, and we swallered it here in this town. And he disappeared in one beautiful tableau to quick music, and we've never heard a word from him till to-day."

"Yes, sounds as though he *has* been savin' up his words," commented Hiram, turning to survey the orator.

Mr. Stickney was concluding his remarks with unction and force.

Then he stepped down, and began to shake hands with all comers. His course through the crowd took him in the direction of Hiram Look and Cap'n Sproul. The cap'n had refrained from comment during the speech. He had read the telegram, and he had studied

Mr. Stickney with interest. Now, when the prodigal came their way on his handshaking mission, he started off toward the station's freight shed.

"Say, hold on!" cried Hiram. "There's nothin' like encouragin' a prodigal when he's got all done proddin'."

"Well, I ain't discouragin' him, am I? I'm goin' after that express bundle."

"But walk up as a prominent citizen of this town, and shake hands with him, and wish him well," insisted Hiram.

The cap'n's silent rebellion against the presence of the returned convert to righteousness seemed to have suddenly turned Hiram's rather cynical attitude to active support.

The cap'n, however, was not to be restrained. He left Hiram pump-handling Mr. Stickney, and when he returned from the freight shed the convocation on the station platform had dissolved. He saw Stickney marching off down the road toward the village, his hands waving, and his general appearance denoting that he was continuing his speech on the subject of returned prodigals. Many of his fellow townsmen

surrounded him, and the others marched behind.

"Looks like a whale in a purse net, that feller does," commented Cap'n Sproul, when he walked up to the wagon in which Hiram awaited him. "Hope when they carve him they'll get all the blubber they expect to."

"Ain't you a little speck sarcastic about a man who has come home to square himself?" inquired Hiram, starting the horse when the cap'n had climbed into his seat.

"I haven't called him half the names you have," retorted Cap'n Sproul.

"Oh, he's mouthy, and I said so, but that ain't anything against a man who is tryin' to do right. And if you've made up your mind to do right, do it good and proper, and for all men to see, so say I."

"There are some folks who can't manage a funeral without havin' a fife-and-drum corps at it. Now, look here, let's not you and me get into any discussion about this old Stick-in-the-mud. I've always been able to pay my bills without gettin' up a torchlight parade. That feller doesn't owe me anything. I'll make so bold as to ask you to set me down at my house with my bundle; and then you can go and join the hoorah. Don't let me bother you."

Hiram obeyed without further comment.

That evening, when the cap'n went to the post office for his mail, he found Mr. Stickney there, holding forth on the delights of coming home "right," and Hiram Look was in the forefront of his admiring auditors.

"It is going to be a labor of love and of pride, fellow citizens," Mr. Stickney was declaring, "to travel around this town, shake the hands of all, and figure up my debts. And then there will come a settling day, on which the eyes of the wide world will be invited to gaze."

Cap'n Sproul departed quietly. His townsmen were too much absorbed to pay any attention to him.

On his return home he found his wife excited by the news with which Scotaze was ringing.

"Emlin Stickney is doing a grand and noble act, Aaron. I have a claim to put

in. I bought some of the stock myself. If you had lived in our town then I believe you would have done it, too."

"I suppose I ought to go out and bid in a little block of it now, so as not to feel lonesome," returned her husband ungraciously.

"You can take mine around and collect."

"If you'll let me look at that docky-ment I'll be much obliged."

She brought the paper. It declared that she was the owner of two shares of stock in Stickney's Horizontal Windmill, at ten dollars per share. The cap'n figured in his notebook for a time, and then gave it up with a snort of disgust.

"I'm no hand at compound interest. We'll make this short and to the point, Louada Murilla. Will you take fifty dollars for this claim, and transfer it to me?"

"If you wish to handle it that way, I'll do so, Aaron, and thank you."

He paid the money into her hands. Then he tore up the certificate, and threw the bits into the stove.

He checked her expostulations.

"I do a lot of things, and don't know why I do 'em," he stated. "Prob'ly, though, I done that so as to make sure he'll have enough to go around. It'll kill some folks in this town if they don't cash in, now that they've got their mouths made up for it. And you and me can't afford to be responsible for any deaths just for the sake of fifty dollars."

Further than that he refused to discuss the matter.

From the time he stepped off the train, Emlin Stickney filled the Scotaze landscape. From the center of every group of men the clamor of his oratory resounded. The gold nuggets danced on his heaving waistcoat. His hands swept around his head in a manner which suggested his invention of the horizontal windmill. He established headquarters at the tavern, and computed interest in public on his debts, shouting the figures for all to hear.

During this period old Doughty occasionally held up at Cap'n Sproul's gate to canvass the situation with a man in

whom he had scented hostility to this returned prodigal. Doughty did the talking. He boasted that Emlin Stickney did not owe him anything.

But he appeared one day with information which interested the cap'n a bit.

"That cuss is certainly making a thorough job of it in this town," he confided. "I've been telling you he didn't owe me anything. Well, sir, he came around to me yesterday, and owned up that when he was a boy he stole apples from my orchard regular. We estimated, took current prices, and figgered the thing, compound interest. That claim runs back further than any of the rest, and the interest piles up." Doughty licked his lips. "It comes to quite a sum. He's going to pay it. Says he will never feel right until he has made a clean sweep of everything."

"You goin' to take it?" asked the cap'n.

"Well, I ain't goin' to hurt a man's feelings by refusing to meet him halfway in a matter of that kind," stated Doughty. "If he wants a clean slate, I'm going to help him clean it."

"Now, if I was you, and had fifty thousand dollars out on first morgidges, I'd never—" began Cap'n Sproul. But he stopped.

"It's nobody's business how much I've got out. But you was going to say something?"

"I was, but I've changed my mind. I was goin' to advise. Now I ain't."

"I want to hear it," insisted Doughty.

"When you're reachin' out for money a man couldn't blow advice into you with a charge of dynamite," returned the cap'n severely. "You have joined the rest of the steer calves. Go chase him. You think he's goin' to give milk! Keep on runnin'."

"Say, you look here; you've been on the off side ever since Em Stickney struck town. It's being talked about. Now, when a man comes back, and means to square things, and—"

"I've heard that tune all I want to," broke in the incomprehensible old mariner. "You go hunt up Hime Look, and sing a duet. Then go around and serenade Foghorn Stickney."

He went into his house, and slammed the door.

"Now that he has gone over the side," mused the cap'n, filling his pipe, "I seem to be like the boy who stood all alone on the burnin' deck. I don't exactly know what I'm standin' there for. Never heard of Stickney, don't know Stickney, don't want to know Stickney. But I was brought up at sea to distrust a greasy swell with a grum roar to it. And I'm no kind of a hand to join into parades."

A few days later Hiram Look appeared to him. He was convoying Emlin Stickney. When Cap'n Sproul opened the front door, answering Hiram's confident knock, the two walked in.

"It's this way," stated Hiram breezily. "You two ought to know each other. You've got to know each other. Both of you square men, with the right ideas about things! Now, shake hands."

Cap'n Sproul was still astonished by the amazing cheek displayed by the old showman. He did not resist when Mr. Stickney grabbed his limp hand, and wagged it.

"You have sailed the ocean blue, and you must be good and true," bellowed the prodigal. "I have expected to meet and greet you in the haunts of men, but, failing that, I have come to you on your own quarter-deck, Captain Sproul."

"Now, Aaron," stated his friend, "we're goin' to come right down to brass tacks. We need you. I need you. The big settlin' day is scheduled for Christmas, and—"

"Good will on earth and peace toward men," chanted Mr. Stickney. "For behold, the prodigal has returned, and on that festal day when angels sing loudest, leaning over the parapets of heaven to view the reunion of friends and kindred below, I shall don the habiliments of Kriss Kringle, and bring to my fellow citizens their honest due. I shall—"

"Hold on just one second," broke in the cap'n. "Havin' been a plain sailor for a good deal of my life, I'm no great hand for wing-flappin'. If there's goin' to be any talk made to me, it'll have to

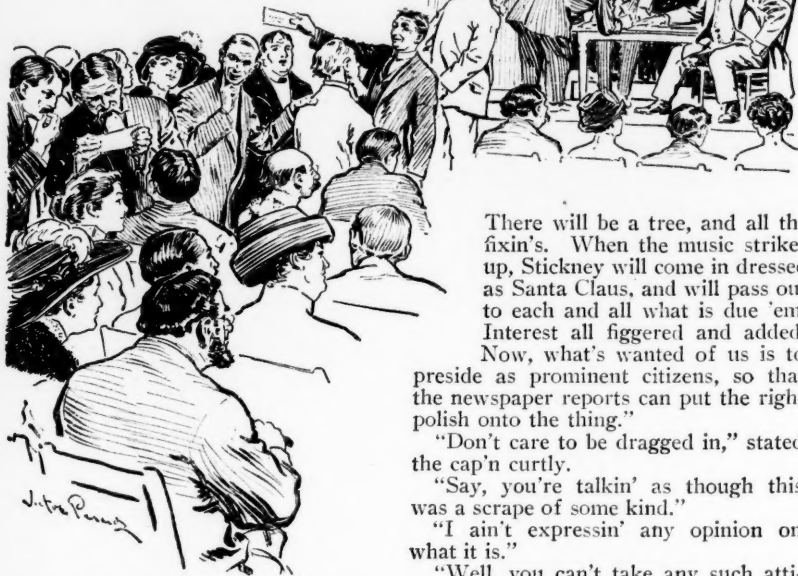
be something else than cockle-doodle-doo."

He was bristling with prompt resentment, and Hiram hurried to the rescue.

"I'll explain it, Mr. Stickney. Aaron and I understand each other."

The cap'n's glowering gaze noted that Hiram was wearing a gold nugget for a scarfpin, visible token that he had been taken into camp.

"I don't know whether we do or not," he growled.



"Sign there," boomed Stickney, his splay finger indicating the line.

"It's just this way. My friend Stickney, here, wants to do his grand work in good and proper shape. You and me are representative citizens, Aaron. We are disinterested because we didn't live here when Stickney went away. You've been high sheriff of the county, and he wants us to add dignity to the occasion."

"Grace and adorn it," Mr. Stickney ventured to add.

"The idea is, the citizens will meet at Odd Fellows' Hall on Christmas Eve.

There will be a tree, and all the fixin's. When the music strikes up, Stickney will come in dressed as Santa Claus, and will pass out to each and all what is due 'em. Interest all figgered and added.

Now, what's wanted of us is to preside as prominent citizens, so that the newspaper reports can put the right polish onto the thing."

"Don't care to be dragged in," stated the cap'n curtly.

"Say, you're talkin' as though this was a scrape of some kind."

"I ain't expressin' any opinion on what it is."

"Well, you can't take any such attitude, and get away with it," insisted the exasperated friend.

"As one gentleman from another, I shall demand an explanation," boomed Mr. Stickney.

"Explanation is I'm mindin' my own business, 'tendin' to it strickly, and wouldn't make any kind of a genial associate for Santa Claus."

"I consider this talk from you an insult," sputtered Stickney.

"And I shall make it my business to report to every man in this town the attitude you are takin' in a case where citizens ought to stand together to give

honor where honor is due," declared Hiram.

"Advertisin' pays," stated the cap'n doggedly. "Go ahead. I seem to be in trouble most of the time, without goin' out huntin' for it. So, in this case, I ain't goin' out huntin'."

His guests stalked out.

When Cap'n Sproul visited the village the next day he found evidence that Hiram had been busy. Sour faces were turned his way. Men growled at him. In the post office he found an interested group studying a broad sheet, framed and suspended in a conspicuous place.

"There was only one man more unpopular in this town than you be," Zebulon Groves informed him icily, "and he stole sheep and poisoned wells. I'm talkin' up harsh, Cap'n Sproul, but it's the sentiment of Scotaze that you ain't showin' any public spirit at a time when public spirit is called for from our leadin' citizens. Now, will you kindly walk up and read that, and see what you think?"

He pointed at the framed sheet. The crowd made a lane for the cap'n, and his curiosity prompted him to march along and read. It was a printed form, done in flowing script:

I, by my signature hereunto attached, do testify, with thankfulness for the honesty of a man who has tried to do right by all, that I have this day received from Emlin Stickney the full amount in which he stood indebted to me. He has set an example for all men to follow. World take note. His old town loves him.

"When they're signed they're all goin' to be bound into an album with gold clasps, and it will be shown to the world," the cap'n was informed by old Doughty. "We don't understand it in you, Cap'n Sproul, the way you're standin' out."

There were murmurs from the others. "I believe, myself, that we ain't makin' any mistake in follerin' Holy Writ," stated Wormell. "Kill the fatted calf when the prodigal returns, that's what I say."

The cap'n marched away, and turned at the door.

"If your prodigal likes veal, feed it to him. Jam him full of it. Make it a

barbecue. Then pick his pockets. If your prodigal winds up busted, send him around to me, and I'll give him pocket money and a railroad ticket to where he wants to go. There isn't another one of you old skinflints here in town who'd do that much! Now, I serve notice on all interested parties that they'd better sheer off, and let me mind my own business in the way I've started out to do."

He slammed the door behind him.

That speech put the capsheaf on the cap'n's unpopularity. Hiram Look came around purposely to tell him so.

"There's a feelin' against you stronger than the one Stickney left behind him when he run away. You'd better change your mind, and 'tend out on the meetin' at the hall."

Cap'n Sproul smoked on sullenly without reply.

"He's goin' in stronger, Stickney is, than he intended to when he came here. He has made his money in a gold mine out West. When he settles with one and all, Christmas Eve, he's goin' to throw in some stock as bonus. Every man gets some. I'm comin' in on that. He has asked me to as a particular favor. Of course, he never owed me anything. But he wants my name in his album, as a representative citizen, and you bet he gets it, too. It's a mighty big thing for Scotaze—and when the newspapers pick it up it's goin' to have a big effect in makin' folks honest."

The cap'n smoked on.

"Now, Aaron, for the sake of makin' this thing unanimous, come around to the celebration, take your present of some stock, and sign for the album."

The cap'n remained dignifiedly silent, and Hiram left him with vituperation. He announced that he intended to parade the Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association to the hall, and in his wrath he threatened to march them around past Cap'n Sproul's house, and give him three groans.

After that the cap'n remained at home closely, and sent for his mail.

"There comes a point where a man's patience gives out," he decided in his own mind. "This town is in a bad

enough way, as it stands to date, without my gettin' arrested for killin' somebody. I reckon I'll stay in out of the way of trouble."

The last appeal was made to him on Christmas Eve by no less a person than his wife, Louada Murilla. She had dressed herself for the great event, without daring to inform the silent cap'n that she intended to attend. But curiosity had proved too much for the poor lady. Even at the risk of her lord's displeasure, she felt that she must behold Emlin Stickney performing the rôle of a Santa Claus returning to square things with his former townsmen.

When her hat was on she came into the parlor where the cap'n was pondering above some tattered charts, with which he had been beguiling his seclusion for several days past.

"I'd give anything if you'd only go down to the hall with me," she pleaded plaintively. "I just can't stay away, Aaron. I don't see how anybody can stay away from such a time as it's going to be."

"You're bound to go, hey?"

"I want to go awfully."

"Louada Murilla, every one in this town needs a guardian—but you seem to be the only person who has got one."

To her astonishment he took off his spectacles, and went for his hat. Such easy capitulation, after those weeks of obstinate opposition to Stickney, almost took her off her feet. But a remark which he dropped while he was locking the front door behind them tempered her surprise.

"I know what a woman is when she gets hity-tity in a crowd of fools. You'd have your name into that album, and I'm goin' along to make sure that you don't put it there."

"But, for mercy's sakes, Aaron, why do you stand out against Stickney the way you're doing?"

"Instink!" stated Cap'n Sproul, with a violence which checked further questions.

The festivities were under way when they arrived, for Louada Murilla had spent valuable time in nerving herself

for what she feared would be an ordeal.

Fiddles and a piano were making music, the hall was packed; the Ancients and Honorables occupying seats together in the front rows, and Hiram was bustling about as master of ceremonies. The cap'n and his wife sat down near the door, and made themselves inconspicuous.

A fir tree, with many candles burning on its branches, gave the proper holiday touch to the scene.

But the great moment was when Emlin Stickney entered. Hiram Look, with showman's knack, deftly played up to that moment. Some one in the vestibule jangled sleigh bells, the orchestra fiddled frantically, and the prodigal bounded through the portals of the big doors, which were flung wide for him.

"A Merry Christmas to my fellow townspeople, one and all!" he shouted, and the folks of Scotaze came onto their feet, and yelled a response that fairly shook the rafters.

Mr. Stickney wasted no time. He made his "repentant prodigal speech," with new trimmings for the occasion, then he shucked himself out of his pointed fur cap and his fur coat, and got down to business.

He sat down behind a little table near the gorgeous tree, and produced stacks of envelopes from his pouch. Hiram Look called the names. Men took their places in line, and pressed along eagerly.

"Sign there," boomed Stickney, his broad hand covering the blank, his splay finger indicating the line. Each signed as fast as he could scratch his name, the others behind crowding him. Then he took his envelope from the hand of Mr. Stickney, and came back into the press of his townsmen.

Each tore open his envelope as he came away from the table. Glistening eyes noted the figures on the check; and the certificates of stock in Stickney's mine filled the hall with crisp cracklings as they were unfolded.

"It seems like letting my good money go to pot, Aaron," whispered his wife.

"You've got your money," the cap'n



And he waved his handkerchief from the rear platform of the car, until the snowy hills closed in behind him.

retorted. "I paid you. As for me, that fifty was an investment."

"In what?"

"I ain't just sure at present writin', but if instink is any guide it will be one of the best investments I ever made."

When the last envelope had been given out, Emlin Stickney arose, and waved his album blanks above his head. He made another speech, apostrophizing those signed documents as a precious heritage to be handed down to posterity. Then he buttoned them in his inside pocket, and shook hands with all comers.

Under cover of that demonstration Cap'n Sproul and his wife escaped.

"You were good to take me, Aaron," she informed him. "I never hankered to go anywhere so bad in my life. I'm glad I saw it all. It will be something to remember after this, when items in the papers come out how all the world is dishonest."

"I'm glad you're satisfied," returned Cap'n Sproul. "When Hime Look and the old tongue-wallopers of this town try to team me into a thing, that's one matter! It's another matter when I'm

accommodatin' my own wife, and savin' her from gettin' into the mess."

Louada Murilla understood that he was still unreconciled to the prodigal. She sighed, and kept silent.

The next day Emlin Stickney left town. His great business interests called him, he announced. The Ancient and Honorable Firemen's Association escorted him to the station with a fife-and-drum corps.

The departing prodigal made a speech from the baggage truck that drew both tears and cheers. And he waved his handkerchief from the rear platform of the car, until the snowy hills closed in behind him.

Life in Scotaze resumed its placid winter monotone. The only flurry of the week following Mr. Stickney's departure was reported by a citizen who went up to Cap'n Sproul's house to pay interest on a mortgage, and insisted on the cap'n's taking an Emlin Stickney check in payment.

"I'll admit I sassed him," reported the citizen at the post office. "But he didn't have any business turnin' down a thing

tha's just as good as legal tender. I'm goin' back up there with the real cash, and hand it to him with tongs. Who will cash this check?"

"I will," declared the loyal Hiram, who had overheard. "And you tell him I done it, and that he ought to be ashamed of himself."

Having been master of ceremonies for Mr. Stickney, Hiram now became a veritable bugle in behalf of the virtues of the prodigal son of Scotaze. He led every stranger up to the framed sheet in the post office, and told them the story of it all. He started a subscription paper for the purpose of buying a watering trough for the village square, with the legend: "In honor of Emlyn Stickney."

One day, soon after New Year's, Cap'n Sproul had a caller. It was Hiram Look. For a fleeting instant the cap'n, having heard news of the watering-trough project, suspected that his friend was displaying some more of his accustomed effrontery, and was after a donation.

But Hiram took a chair, and was silent, gazing at the cap'n with a stricken-doe sort of expression.

"Well," blurted the host at last, restive under the gaze, "what's your particular ailment to-day?"

"Aaron, if you was hep to the whole business, wise to the whole shenanigan, the way your actions have shown for the last few weeks, why in the devil didn't you let an old friend in, instead of standin' back, and lettin' him have his financial pelt skihooified off'n him?"

"You'll have to point her into the wind closer than that," the cap'n advised. "Meanin' that I don't have the least earthly notion of what you're talkin' about."

"Them Stickney checks are comin' back marked 'No Funds.'"

The horns of Hiram's mustache drooped, and his tone had a wail in it.

"Well, I didn't guarantee his bank account. What are you comin' to me about it for?"

"You had a line on him. Your actions have shown it. You have let me get yanked overboard. I'm in worse than

any of the others. I've cashed a lot of the checks."

"Never knew anything about that man! Didn't know as much about him as you did, for you messed in thicker with him!" asserted the cap'n, so stoutly that Hiram was impressed.

"What made you hang off, then?"

"Instink."

Hiram merely blinked at him. This form of defensive knowledge was beyond his ken.

"It's the same thing that keeps an elephant from crossin' a bridge that ain't safe," explained the cap'n. "It's developed in a man by goin' to sea most of his life. I don't believe the circus business develops it—you don't seem to have it."

"His checks were drawn on a bank in Grangeville, Idaho," mourned Hiram, "and I've looked it up, and it's in the middle of Camas Prairie, and that's why we're only just hearin' from 'em. But I can't figger it all out yet. He didn't take anything out of us. It was all a free, clear present, what he did."

"You were pretty intimate," pursued the cap'n remorselessly. "You must know him well. Don't consider that he's got a strong sense of humor, and came back here to play a joke on the whole town, do you?"

"He ain't humorous."

"What sort of a dockymment did you all sign when you herded along there to that table?"

"It was shown to you, framed there in the post office. Everybody knew what it was," said Hiram sourly.

"I ain't talkin' about what was hung up in the post office. I'm talkin' about what you signed. I'm quite a hand to look at what I sign myself. But as near as I could judge from where I sat, you all marched up to that table, and signed with your eyes shut."

"It couldn't have been anything else but that thing he wanted for his album," insisted the old showman, but his face grew pale. "He wouldn't dare to——" He paused.

"Well, a prodigal expects veal when he gets home—there's good authority for that! And Stickney seems to have

found a fine lot of steer calves here waitin' for him."

Hiram glared at him, his hands gripping the arms of his chair.

"If he ain't of a humorous turn of mind—and you ought to know, havin' been so chummy with him—it ain't likely that he would come here, and waste all the time he's put in around town just for the sake of his health. Mind you, I ain't predictin' nor throwin' cold water, for this thing ain't any of my business, and I'll leave it to you if I ain't kept out of it. But for a guess, I'll say this: Havin' found it so easy to bunko this whole town once, this Stickney has come back, and bunkoed it all over again. It's just instink on my part—nothin' but that. Nothin' you take any stock in, or you would have followed my example."

Hiram got up, kicked his chair back, and marched out of the house. The smug tones of the cap'n's voice, the glint in the cap'n's eyes, were too much for his self-control.

A few weeks later the blow fell on Scotaze.

Her citizens, to the extent of a hundred or more, were informed that for value received—to wit, certain shares in an Idaho gold mine of uncertain reputation, they had signed thirty-day notes, ranging from one thousand dollars in the case of their richest citizen, Eckwith Doughty, down the list—financial responsibility of each having been looked to carefully by a man who knew their resources well—and that man was their prodigal. Innocent parties had discounted the notes.

Scotaze howled, writhed, threatened to fight—and then paid. Their lawyers advised them to do so, for precedent was against them.

After it was all over Cap'n Aaron Sproul assumed a new position in the hearts of his townsmen, for he displayed a trait which meaner souls appreciate even when they cannot emulate; he went abroad among the men of the town, and never mentioned Emlin Stickney, his exploit, or his own escape to any living person. And that is self-restraint raised to the sixty-fourth degree.



A Spring Storm

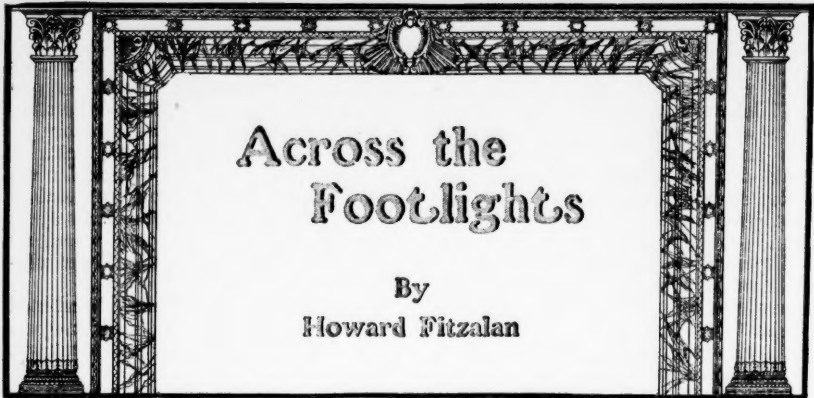
LAST night, when all the sunset lay
One primrose-yellow, and the stain
Spread to some crocus cups astray,
A knowing robin piped of rain.

And look! A pale mist climbs the sky,
Already is the plum bough thinned
Of its white lace; a butterfly
Like a torn petal, beats the wind.

Small matter, love! Though whirling dust
Be drenched to mire; though many a pool
Dimple your garden, and the rust
Redden on some unsheltered tool,

Here are we happy, safe from wet.
Your face shall be my flower; your eyes
Serve for the new-sprung violet;
Your heart my sweetest pleasure lies.

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



Across the Footlights

By
Howard Fitzalan

CURIOSLY enough, of late, the praiseworthy plays have been the work of people hardly known. Except for "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine," the joint effort of a best-selling author and our leading American playwright, and "The Bird of Paradise," by the man who collaborated with David Belasco on "The Rose of the Rancho," the roster of playwrights to be given a New York hearing and whose work is such as to be considered seriously comprises the names of Marion Fairfax, Augustin MacHugh, Edward Hemmerde, Francis Neilson, and Maurice Donnay. The latter person, one of the minor members of the French Dramatic Authors, furnished the play in which Madame Simone returned to score the success she failed to achieve in the two Bernstein thrillers, "The Thief" and "The Whirlwind," in which she made her first inauspicious New York appearances.

This play is a purely intellectual one. Its purpose seems to be the setting forth of Donnay's theory that the marriage of a Christian to a Jew is bound to be a failure. It is a Jewess in this case, the man being a celebrated French author. He is happily married when he meets her, but *Henriette* implants in him strange stirrings for what she considers a bigger sort of existence. Al-

though he loves *Henriette*, he will not separate from his wife, so the Jewess leaves one of his letters where the wife can read it. The wife's pride cannot stand the knowledge that her husband remains with her simply because of his duty to his children. She drives him out.

The "bigger life" begins for the author. *Henriette* gathers in her drawing-room many cosmopolites, many celebrities; mostly Jews. Having no ties of country, they urge, among other things, that patriotism is merely narrow-mindedness. This is too much for the author, a fervent French patriot. He asks the chief exponent of antimilitarism and antinationalism to leave his house.

Henriette considers that this indignity received while enjoying her hospitality places her under obligations to the insulted one. She works, therefore, to secure him a position he desires, in doing which she feels she has the right to forge the author's name to a letter, recommending his enemy. Incidentally, the author is backing a particular friend for the same place, and the forged letter defeats that friend.

Henriette does not wait to be discovered. She considers she has done only what is right, and what was due the man the author insulted. The use of

the author's name, she tells him, was his contribution to the wiping out of the insult. She has simply done what the author should have done, had he the finer instincts he should have.

This makes it certain to the author finally that what she considers the "bigger life" is simply a life devoid of morality—as he sees morality. *Henriette*, therefore, leaves him, telling him she is disappointed; that he is only a narrow-minded bourgeois, after all. We last see the author suing for forgiveness from the mother of his children, hoping that things may again be as they were before *Henriette* entered his life.

Although Madame Simone—late Le Bargy—is of the race of the woman she portrays, and the play, on its surface, seems a defense of the Jew, it appears to exalt the Jewish intellect at the expense of all other qualities. Some consider it a fair-minded exposition of both sides of the case—Jew and Christian. The subject is handled with the craftsmanship that distinguishes the French school. A French drawing-room is actually put on the stage. "The Return to Jerusalem" is transplanted Paris; not the Paris of the grand boulevard, but Paris of the Academy, the Conservatoire, the House of Deputies. But it is a play for intellectual people, both in its writing and its acting. Madame Simone is quite untheatrical, very reposed, very natural; preferring to accentuate the psychological side of a character rather than the physical one.

"THE TALKER."

Harry is a clerk making two hundred dollars a month. He marries because he wants a home. He moves into the suburbs, pays one hundred dollars on a five-thousand-dollar house, and works hard to pay off the rest of the debt. He has no servant; there are only himself and his wife, who is "The Talker."

She does not do her share toward making "the home." She neglects her work, keeps the place in rather a slovenly condition, does not distinguish herself as a cook. Instead, she addresses

the women of the neighborhood whenever possible on their benighted condition. She is an advocate of free love among other things.

"Sooner than marry the average stupid man," she says, "it is better to have a few months of life with a brilliant one."

Harry's little sister *Ruth* lives with them. She listens to the "Talker," and believes all she says.

Ruth meets a plausible blackguard. The seed, already sowed by her sister-in-law, is watered by him. He persuades her to elope with him, which she does, knowing he is married at the time.

Too late the knowledge comes to the "Talker" that her ill-considered words have caused this catastrophe. Her husband leaves her. She begins to hunt for *Ruth*. In her hunt she is thrown in with many unfortunate girls who have left home under conditions similar to those *Ruth* faced. She helps each and every one of them to get on their feet again. *Ruth* comes home finally, a broken girl. "The Talker" takes her to her heart. When the knowledge comes to her husband of the girls his wife has helped, husband and wife become reunited again, and all three leave for another country, where *Ruth* will have a second chance, unhampered by bad counsel.

The author of "The Talker" is a woman—Marion Fairfax—and married to Tully Marshall, who enacts *Harry* in the play. Her argument is directed not against advanced views in woman, but against the half-baked philosophy of the half-educated woman who expounds wild theories without considering the responsibilities their promulgation entails. Also, Marion Fairfax is very bitter against the woman who accepts everything from a husband and fails to give anything in return, grumbling continually about woman's higher sphere when she is not fit to fill a place in a lower one.

"The Talker" sets forth all this very entertainingly. It is one of the best plays ever written by a woman. No woman should overlook seeing it.

"THE BUTTERFLY ON THE WHEEL."

A foolish married woman of another type is *Peggy*, "the Butterfly." She imagines that it is quite right to lead a young gentleman on, on, on, in a flirtation, and then stands upon the conventional dignity given by her marriage lines. *Peggy's* husband is a hard-working English statesman; he trusts his wife implicitly, allows her much liberty. *Peggy* enjoys her flirtation with his young friend immensely. The friend believes she loves him. Believing it only a question of satisfying her self-respect, he arranges that they shall miss a train to Switzerland, and be left in Paris overnight. He has wired for adjoining rooms at a Paris hotel.

Another woman, who loves *Peggy's* husband, *Admaston*, advises the husband that his wife and his friend are together in Paris. *Admaston* telephones from London to his wife's room at the Paris hotel. His friend answers the telephone. *Admaston's* worst suspicions are confirmed. He takes the night mail to Paris.

Meanwhile *Peggy* has repulsed the overtures of her gallant, declaring she has always loved her husband, has flirted only to amuse herself.

But when *Admaston* arrives next morning and sees the proximity of their rooms, he does not believe. He institutes suit for divorce against his wife. Then you see poor, foolish little *Peggy* in the great, gloomy courtroom, hedged in on all sides by frowning men who have judged her guilty before it is proven. She is made to contradict herself, to practically convict herself. Seeing that she is clay in the hands of the prosecution, she breaks down, after an impassioned speech to the court, disclaiming against the injustice of man-made laws.

Afterward we see the husband convinced, through a lucky accident, of his wife's guiltlessness, and the curtain falls on them reunited. It is the sort of play to appeal particularly to women, and there is much to be said in favor of *Peggy's* anguished cry that some day men who understand women will make

different laws. But two ethical features of the play obsess those who give it careful thought. First: The husband who would subject his wife to so terrible an ordeal on circumstantial evidence would not be likely to take her back again on scanty grounds; nor would a man who loved a woman devotedly put her through such a racking as *Peggy* received. Second: It is doubtful whether a woman, after having been publicly disgraced by her husband, could find it in her heart to forgive him and live publicly with him again. However, of such things let the ladies judge. It is, primarily, a play for them, and a play with one big stirring scene; the best court scene outside of that one in John Galsworthy's masterpiece, "Justice"—never done in America—that the present reviewer has ever witnessed.

"LYDIA GILMORE."

There is a courtroom scene in this latest play by Henry Arthur Jones also, but not so good a one by half. It deals with a trial for murder. *Lydia's* husband is confronted by the husband of another woman at a midnight rendezvous; public disgrace for *Gilmore* and for the other man's wife seems imminent; a fight follows in which *Gilmore* kills the other man. *Gilmore* runs home, unseen, tells his guilt to his wife, *Lydia*. For the sake of their boy, *Lydia* agrees to perjure herself to the effect that her husband has never left her side that night.

Lydia has long since tired of her husband. Another man, an eminent lawyer, loves her, but she does not permit him to forget she is *Gilmore's* wife. *Gilmore* is suspected, imprisoned. Only the unbroken alibi of his wife can save him. Finally the eve to the trial comes. *Lydia* has written out her perjured evidence, memorized it, and is keyed up to do what she has promised. But the prosecuting attorney falls ill. The case is to be postponed. *Lydia* breaks down; says she cannot stand the strain of more waiting. At this breakdown, her lawyer friend is present. He is telephoned

for, and offered the prosecutor's place. He refuses. Then a plan comes to him.

If the prosecution "stood in" with the defense; asked only such questions as would bring out favorable answers; and, instead of racking the wife of the accused, heartened her, it looks as though *Gilmore* could be cleared.

So run his thoughts. He accepts the prosecution. Then he sits down with *Lydia*, and carefully rehearses her in answers to the questions he is going to ask.

The trial passes off happily, it seems at first. The prosecution rests its point. But the judge has received an anonymous letter saying that *Lydia's* boy knows his father was not in the house at the time of the murder. When the judge threatens to send for the boy and put him on the witness stand, *Lydia* shrieks out that she will tell the truth.

Gilmore is convicted, but he does not wait for the black cap. He has secreted poison on him when arrested; he takes it, and *Lydia* is left free to marry the man who aided her at the sacrifice of his professional standing and dignity. At least, we suppose that will happen a year or so after the curtain falls.

Henry Arthur Jones is always a master craftsman, but it was so evident in "*Lydia Gilmore*" that he was writing up to a "big" central situation that when the situation came it was anticlimatic and not very convincing. *Gilmore*, who assumed a harassed guilty look from the moment he killed the other man, helped kill Jones' effect also; any reasonably sane man would have arrested *Gilmore* on his looks alone.

It seems that while Jones retains much of his skill as a story-teller, he is reaching that stage in his life where he has no more stories to tell, no more beliefs to urge, so that his plays lack inspiration and conviction. This same criticism could have been written about "*We Can't Be as Bad as All That*," the Jones' play which came just before this one.

Margaret Anglin, who is *Lydia*, plays in the manner that first made her famous—her weepy, choking manner.

"THE BIRD OF PARADISE."

This play deals in atmosphere—the atmosphere of languor, of easy living, where things physical are worshiped and things spiritual are somewhat discounted. It is the work of a native dramatist, who did an atmosphere play before when he collaborated with David Belasco on "*The Rose of the Rancho*." This later-day play attempts to do for the Hawaiian Islands of the early nineties what "*The Rose*" did for Southern California of the early fifties, and while it lacks the master touch that Belasco would have put on it, it is still a very interesting play, from an entertainment standpoint and an ethnological one.

The beach comber, *Ten Thousand Dollar Dean*, is interesting in his degradation, recalling "*The Ebb Tide*" and the wastrels so accurately painted and so well understood by Robert Louis Stevenson. *Dean* will not eat with the natives. Soaked in alcohol as he is, sunning his rags in the sun, worthless, a danger mark to all other Americans, a well-known object lesson for the missionaries, he yet retains his belief in the superiority of a renegade white man over the best Kanaka living. This is why, perhaps, when a white woman finally took enough personal interest in him to display herself in all her charms for his benefit and talk to him as she would to an equal, it was not difficult to reform him. But, after reforming, he became a conventional person, uttering platitudes, and ceased to be interesting.

On the other hand, *Paul Wilson* began as an uninteresting, platitudinous white man, the sort of omniscient, priggish young man our universities turn out in such great numbers. He had come out to work among the lepers at Molokai in the hope of discovering some cure for their disease. But *Luana*, a charming golden-skinned young princess, who "loved with her lips and her arms," determined to have him for a husband, and set to work to keep him at her side. She succeeded, and the beach comber, *Dean*, fortu-

nately a graduate of medicine, went on with *Wilson's* fiancée to take up the work that the young doctor had abandoned for *Luana*.

So long as *Luana's* love "of the lips and the arms" remained a novelty to him, the young college man rejoiced in the sunshine, the tropic flowers, the idleness—it was all *dolce far niente* and *mañana por la mañana*. But when *Dean*, the beach comber, comes back, rehabilitated, engaged to marry the girl that *Wilson* threw over for his Kanaka princess, and, better than that, the discoverer of a leprosy cure, *Wilson* wanted freedom and opportunity to live like a white man again, to achieve something—be somebody. In vain *Luana* tried to imitate the woman of his race. Seeing finally that there was no hope for her, she gave up her white woman's clothes, gave up the life in the uncomfortable hotel, and left her husband to live his real life in which his marriage to her had been but a minor episode.

This Hawaiian girl is, without doubt, one of the most appealing, picturesque, lovable, and well-acted characters ever seen on the American stage, for which the credit must be divided between the author and one of the most magnetic young women now playing in English—Laurette Taylor.

"THE TRAIL OF THE LONESOME PINE."

Of all men writing for the stage in America to-day, Eugene Walter must stand at the head of the list for "Paid in Full" and "The Easiest Way." Also, he wrote a corking melodrama when he wrote "The Wolf," thereby proving he *could* write melodrama. It is unnecessary to prove that John Fox writes interesting novels. "A Knight of the Cumberland," "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come," and "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine" are all stories distinguished by a charming and graceful style. The story of the latter, with the dramatic version, is appealing in its simple emotional qualities.

June, the half-savage daughter of a mountaineer, down in that district where families have feuds and declare war each upon the other, falls in love

with a New Yorker; and, with his assistance, educates herself to be the sort of girl he would be likely to marry. As a study in simple feminine psychology, interspersed as it is with rough but true characterizations of the mountain folk, "The Lonesome Pine" should be at home even on the library of the critical. How was it possible then for so accomplished a dramatist as Walter, with fairly acceptable dramatic material before him and writing the play for his wife, Charlotte Walker, to produce a piece so essentially undramatic? It seems as though Walter had respected Fox's speeches and book characterization to such an extent that he determined to get into the play as much of Fox and as little of Walter as was possible. In this he succeeded, but the Fox material, so charmingly diffuse in the book, became a mere procession of sounds in the theater. But—let us not be hasty! At the theater when it is played, one sees gray-haired ladies and impressionable girls having what is termed, I believe, a "good cry." Their interest in *June* is intense; in her development, her love, her final victory.

"OFFICER 666."

One of the genuine surprises of the season was afforded New York in this, one of the merriest, maddest farces seen in a decade. It is slight of texture, but sufficient for a rare evening of laughter.

It is another "Arsène Lupin," with its cool, polished, suave, nefarious collector of rare paintings, who does his collecting without the consent of the pictures' owners. He is involved in a series of situations from which it appears no human being could escape ultimate jailing and sentence, but this gentleman foils everybody, and does it in a manner that wrings shrieks of applause from the most right-minded. He fails only in winning the girl he loves; she falls to the share of the young clubman whose name and residence the *Lupin* person has been using in the clubman's absence. And the audience, for the moment, is almost sorry the thief doesn't get her, too.



THE INTERFERING GHOST

ALMA MARTIN ESTABROOK

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

THE desert would soon look like a friar's cloak flung down for the night, so softly brown would it lie beneath the moon; but now, an hour after sunset, some touch of carmine and gold was still upon it, a lingering dream light which rested tenderly.

On the tawny cliffs that walled the small mining town, Indian supper fires faded, while dusky figures circled them or glowed dully on the trails. The crested buttes were softened by the in-folding light, and even the ugly little camp itself lay not without charm, there among the low hills of the Mohave Desert, on the edge of the Walapi Bad Lands.

In the dooryard of an ancient adobe house, a man and woman sat together watching the coming of the night. He was old, fitting the desert as did the cacti, and the greasewood, and the haze itself, while she was young, and fitted it not at all. Yet some play of temperament marked them unmistakably akin.

The house was like the man. It was like him in the strength of its build and in a certain ruggedness of outline, its vivid coloring suggesting his militancy. The thick walls of it seemed to have grown straight out of the ground. They had been recently whitewashed, and the drippings from an unskilled Walapi workman's brush were still white on the pink sands, as if the last long-ago rain had turned to milk upon leaving the spotless eaves. The roof was of red

corrugated iron, marked to resemble tiling. The outside wall set flush with the street; but a small, gravelly plot at the side was inclosed by a whitewashed picket fence, and presided over by a shaggy eucalyptus tree. A tin bucket filled with pebbles and surmounted by a Chinese lily swung from a chain, its weight keeping the gate closed. A row of umbrella trees and mass of rose-bushes—treasured at Heaven knew what pains—helped to seclude the spot.

One could usually find a hammock there, and a bench, and rocking-chairs. In the afternoon an awning was dropped over it, so low that the passer-by could see only the owner's sturdy shanks beneath the white and red stripes. Sometimes a woman stopped to chat with the master of the house, sometimes a man, sometimes a leathery old buck from the wikiups on the cliffs, sometimes a group of Indians, the blue and scarlet blankets of the squaws lending a bizarre note that was almost Oriental.

Old John Footner—the Reverend Doctor Footner he would have been elsewhere—was equally the friend of them all; of the beggarly Walapi, and the heterogeneous mine workers; of the solemn and picturesque Hindus who sometimes found their way into camp; of the young mining engineers from the East; of the Yankee and Irish store-keepers, and the whole curiously gathered three hundred habitants of the place.



"Do you love the man you are to marry?" he questioned, in his ever-direct way.

Equally their friend was he, and equally ready to help in the fighting of their various battles. For battle was in the red corpuscles of him, else he would never have quitted the path of leisure and pleasantness to which he had been born for the arduous one of the desert.

A fish-hook cactus in his yard, its lavender spines changing to crimson beneath the water with which he sometimes drenched it, used to suggest a resemblance to himself.

"We are alike, that cactus and I," he would say, with his queer smile. "Our fighting blood comes out at the very first dash—for which may the good Lord forgive us!"

There are, however, much worse things for which to plead forgiveness than a righteous itch for worthy warfare. And if some urge in his blood, some primal thing in him, cried out for this land where men stand for the stuff

that is in them, if he needed the desert, the desert, in turn, needed him.

To-night as he lay comfortably in his chair, no sanguinary impulse was astir in him, however. Rather he was in his mellowest, most companionable mood, for Elena, his niece, had stopped en route from her home in the East on her way to San Mateo, where she was to visit her brother, Eustace, and the world seemed extraordinarily good to him.

He was fonder of Elena than of any one in the world. More than any one, she embodied that old Peloponnesian blitheness of spirit which he so admired. His heart warmed anew to her as they sat there together, soft, little, life sounds about them; the brushing of a broom over a threshold, his housekeeper humming a bit of a hymn, the bubbly chant of a teakettle, the sleepy breath of a dog, a windmill somewhere in the distance.

"Isn't this just the time to give me the great piece of news for which your mother's letter prepared me?" he presently suggested.

"Mother exaggerates its importance," said Elena. "I'm merely to be married."

"*Merely?*" The tone was sharp and reproachful.

"I'm not flippant," she pleaded, with a pretty flaming of color. "It's only that she is so much more excited about it than I. She and Eusty."

"How old are you, Elena?" he asked.

"Twenty."

"And you are not excited?"

"I was never cooler about anything in my life, Uncle John."

"Do you love the man you are to marry?" he questioned, in his ever-direct way.

For a moment only the little life sounds made answer. His niece's eyes were deeply gray beneath their black brows. She smiled, sober-mouthed.

"Eh, do you, my dear?" he persisted.

"There is a love that isn't quite love, but that's nearly so," she said, without looking at him.

His gray eagle of a face grew very grave. The little garden plot seemed to quiver with his unspoken protest.

"We can't all reach Arcady," she defended, the dream light falling softly about her. "Halfway there must satisfy some of us."

"An unhappy marriage is earth's worst affliction."

She stretched out her upturned hands in a wistful little gesture. "Isn't it better to begin with the comfortable affection which is said to be ideal than to drop prosaically into it after your dream has faded?"

"The dream need not fade," said he.

"I wonder."

The evening wind whispered a soft, weird rune to the desert. The distant windmill creaked increasingly. An Indian in a near-by gulch shouted stridently at his pony.

"To love perfectly isn't given to all women," the old minister said. "It is a gift—your gift, which you are deliberately throwing away."

"Not deliberately," she breathed.

He needed no explanation. Family propulsion was back of it all. He had no patience with his sister, Agatha, in her ambitions for the child. And as for Eustace, his nephew, the mere thought of that anæmic young man made him long to go forth and slay something.

"We have to face things for ourselves," he said, with a rare note of irritation. "We must make up our own minds."

"I don't think I can be called exactly boneless," Elena protested. "It wasn't mother alone who got me into it, nor even mother and Eusty together. It was the two of them, and fate; and I'd like to see anybody stand out against such a combination!"

The gravely plot was very quiet for a few minutes, with nothing to disturb its silence save two Walapi women who trotted by on bare feet, and peered curiously in.

"You are choosing the shadow instead of the substance," he said at last.

"I am not choosing," said Elena.

"Then the engagement must be broken," he thundered militantly.

"All my life you've said to me: 'Your word is your word, remember,'" she reminded him. "Shall I break it now?"

He got up and moved restlessly about the yard, plucking a dead leaf from the eucalyptus, whisking off a bug from a rose leaf.

"Didn't the right man ever appear?" he demanded, wheeling suddenly upon her.

She answered with a goaded gesture.

"We quarreled," she said. "When you do that you do strange things afterward—engaging yourself to some one else, for instance. I don't suppose you can understand."

"Perhaps I can," he said gently—for him. "Where is this right man now?"

"At the end of the world, perhaps. I haven't heard in a year. It doesn't matter." She stood up, with the manner of one who, having abandoned a wish above all other wishes, accepts what life offers with the cheerful intention of making the best of it. "I'm going for a walk before it's dark. I won't go far."



"Come in, won't you, doctor?" he urged.

As she went through the gate, he leaned back in his chair, opening his big palms with a movement of partial resignation, the passionless resignation of the aged. Then suddenly some part of him which had been long dead seemed to come startlingly to life, rebelling at the meekness of his acquiescence. He got up, and took sharp turns about the yard, storm clouds gathering in his keen old eyes.

The pink light died slowly to lavender as he strode back and forth, the lavender changed to rose-shot brown. Stars showed about the peaks of the Music Mountains, and down on Front Street the violins and pianos of the White Burro and The Bar Of Gold, and Jack's Place—those citadels of iniquity against which he so ceaselessly made warfare—began to torture the air.

He moved in his dooryard, a powerful, emphatic presence, the gray eagle face becoming more and more unyielding. He was devising ways and means

to stop this marriage, which seemed to him unholy.

But in the end he let himself down in his chair again, drew his old hat low over his jutting forehead, elevated his rheumatic ankle, and muttered:

"Your word is your word!"

It was the reiterate cry of his long years. Its reverberation had started in his youth. By it his life had been shaped. Reveille it had been to him, and drumbeats along the way of march. And when his night should close down about him, it must be taps as well.

Elena, returning, found him there; and something about him—the limping hands, the lines about the eyes, the whole drooping of the big body—seemed to emphasize anew the old fact of his loneliness.

"How he must have loved Aunt Hannah!" she said to herself. "And how he still misses her!"

Memory brought back to her that gull-plump lady, with her capable hands

folded tranquilly upon her stomach, her positive chin resting in like tranquillity upon the cameo brooch she always wore. How quaintly amusing she had been in her dress. How amusing, also, in her emphatic satisfaction with all that related to her in the possessive case—with her own person, her husband, her house, the especial kind of bootees which she alone knew how to crochet for the children of the parish, her last evolved recipe for piccalilli, her way of having the table linen done up.

A strange helpmate for a man like her uncle, Elena thought. How far short of his splendid stride her little, pattering step had seemed to fall. Yet how tenderly he had cherished her! How sacredly he held her memory! It only went to prove that marriage is what the parties to it know it to be, and not what the outside world thinks it.

Memory brought back another face, flower sweet in its purity and elusive charm; the face of the woman who had once been pointed out to her when she was a child as one who might have been

her aunt had not she and her uncle quarreled.

Elena remembered her sense of aggrivement that the lovely lady had been lost to her Uncle John, and therefore to her. And a fresh wave of pity for him touched her now. She had the conviction that, without knowing it, perhaps, he had cheated himself, as she was being forced to cheat herself.

Tiptoeing, she leaned over the back of his chair, and laid her lips for an instant against his grizzled hair.

The next morning, as he was dressing, he heard her singing somewhere in the house. The song tripped in places; in others quite lost itself, but rose again in quick, birdlike trills and runs.

He smiled, his queer, grim smile. Her bravado in no way deceived him.

Later in the morning, when he tried to settle to the business of his Sunday-morning sermon, the thought of her kept intruding distractingly. He had finished only a page of it, when she suddenly thrust her lugubrious little face in at the door.



"She fled with a yell along the rocks."

"I'm so sorry to bother you, Uncle John," she said; "but the squaw who has come to wash, *won't* wash, and Esther"—Esther was the housekeeper—"has gone out to do the marketing, and I can't make head or tail of what's the matter with the silly creature. She is jabbering wildly about a papoose and a steel trap. Maybe you'd better come and see what it's all about."

He strode impatiently into his kitchen. The blanketed squaw who sat in the middle of it, her mane over her eyes, continued to rock herself back and forth as she poured out a fresh torrent of woe, of which Elena could understand no part whatever, but which Footner must have comprehended, for, motioning the chattering creature to the wash-tubs, he crossed to his study and took up his hat.

To Elena he explained that the woman had evidently been pilfering somewhere, and that the trap which had been set for her had caught her four-year-old papoose. He would go and find the child. It was an outrage, but these Walapi women had small moral sense. And she was the best laundress of the lot, so he put up with her.

He passed the little houses of the camp, stopping at several open doors to look in or to question some member of the family as they appeared at the threshold. He passed the wikiups on the farther cliffs, sometimes pausing to interrogate a squaw who wove her crude baskets in the shadow of a wind-break or rolled her bread between flat stones.

A half mile from town he came to a shack which stood directly under the lee of a huge bowlder, which thrust itself out from the cañon walls. It was the temporary habitat of a young mining engineer named Mosset.

The old minister stopped at the open door, and looked in, smiling a little at the sight which met his eyes. Mosset sat at table with a most solemn-visaged papoose—the one he was hunting. The child was apparently as naked as when he came into the world, his splendid little torso shining like a polished brown shell. The legs beneath the table were,

however, incased in a pair of trousers so crude in cut they might have been hacked with an ax from a piece of sail-cloth.

Mosset was just refilling the youngster's plate, and smiling over at him in rare fellowship. Many weathers had browned and seasoned the young engineer. He was lean, with the leanness of men of his kind; men who, for one reason or another, follow far trails, daring the weird of the desert with laughing defiance; outdoor men who wear away early every ounce of superfluous flesh about them.

At old John Footner's low whistle of surprise, he came to his feet with a hearty greeting.

"Come in, won't you, doctor?" he urged. "I am entertaining a rather unexpected visitor, and we're breakfasting rather later than is my habit."

His significant glance left the papoose, and traveled to the wide-mouthed fireplace where a steel trap yawned its cavernous jaws. These jaws had been robbed of their cruelty by being bound carefully with cloth.

"Some one has been stealing me blind for weeks," Mosset explained. "Yet for the life of me, I couldn't catch them. It was always when I was away, and there was no clew as to how they got in. Finally I decided it must be through the chimney, so I set the trap; but I was after the big fellow, not the little one, and I padded the thing. My Lord, if I hadn't! It's an infernal shame for anybody to use a kid like that. Something will have to be done about it. To think of her lowering him down the chimney on a mission like that!"

"You may leave the matter with me," Footner said. "The squaw who did it is my laundress. She is a better washerwoman than she is a Walapi, I'm sorry to say. If you can give me an idea as to the amount of her thievery, I'll try to see—"

"Oh, nonsense! I've had my money's worth," Mosset declared, with a laughing gesture of dismissal. "This young man's acquaintance is worth all the bacon and lard I've lost. He's a rum little chap. As game as they make them.

When I came home at a wholly unusual hour this morning—that's what fooled her, I suppose—the squaw was pushing wildly on my door trying to get in. At sight of me, she fled with a yell along the rocks, hiding her face with her blanket. I opened the door, and there was this copper-colored little goblin in the trap. Not crying, mind you. Just blinking his big, black eyes at me. So we made friends. And here we are, eh, Choski?"

The papoose, having finished his breakfast to the last crumb, slipped down from the table, and, moving over to Mosset, sidled like an affectionate puppy against his legs.

"He pays you a compliment, Mosset," the minister said. "The Walapi makes friends slowly. Ordinarily it takes him years. Well, shall we go now, Choski? I must get back to my sermon."

He moved toward the door, his glance traveling with interest about the room.

"A comfortable place you have here, Mosset. I don't wonder you prefer it to the hotel. Why, who is this?" he exclaimed, with a step toward the mantel, on which were six photographs of the same girl.

"She was—er—a friend of mine, doctor," Mosset stammered, in evident embarrassment. "You'd have liked her, sir. She was your type, straightforward and square as they're made. She had fun in her, too—more fun than any girl I ever knew, and fire. Lord, how she'd fight if you tackled anything she stood for."

Old John Footner said nothing. Merely he peered through his glasses at Elena as she stepped from a canoe; at



At a curve in the tortuous trail they faced the west.

Elena on skis; at Elena with her ridiculous chow dogs on a leash; at Elena with her arms full of roses; at Elena on horseback; at Elena staring straight out of the sixth picture with all her girlish dream in her eyes.

"There seem to be—er—a good many of her," he dryly observed.

"There's only one of her in the whole world!" Mosset exclaimed boyishly. Then he sighed, and moved away from the mantel, his guest following. "I'm sorry I put you to the trouble of coming for the kid," he said.

"Maybe it wasn't you who put me to it," Footner said enigmatically, and, taking the papoose by the elbow, he marched him toward the trail, many inner voices clamoring in him; voices which had been sternly silenced through long years, but which now refused the restraint he would have put upon them. They dinned in his ears and smote on his heart.

"Tell him she is here," they chorused. "She is promised to another man," he defended.

"You were promised to another, also, and you stayed by your promise. Are you willing she should walk the path of loneliness you have walked?"

He started sharply, as if the words had been flung out upon the air and would go scuttling off down the hills across the world to the far-away grave of the woman who for forty years had walked steadfastly at his side, and in their reverberation arouse her from that serenity which wrapped her only less securely in death than it had wrapped her in life.

"She gave me all she had to give!" he cried aloud. "The blame was not hers that I asked more."

He strode sternly up the path, dragging the papoose after him.

At a curve in the torturous trail they faced the west, a waterless world of unpeopled distances, a land which lay like the back-stretching life of the man—with the sun upon it, but with no flower lifting itself in all the shimmering distance, and no grateful shade of tender green.

"Full desertness in souls, as countries, lieth silent bare," the inner voice quoted.

He lifted his hand in a wordless gesture of protest. A mortal sickness born of shame was on him. He threw back his head, the sun striking him in the eyes; and again he spoke aloud militantly, as if to a visible enemy:

"My life has been full of labor and the satisfaction of it. I have had a good woman's companionship and her ministry. The affection of long association bound us. I have been blessed above many men. I have asked no more for myself, nor do I ask it for my niece."

And, with the papoose's grubby little hand held close, he continued rapidly toward camp, his gray head towering, his stick thrashing the mesquite and the greasewood, his shadow grimly bestriding the path.

"Do I tire you, Choski?" he demanded suddenly, remembering the child. "Eh? Then we'll rest a bit. Sit there."

He sank upon a rock, and presently let his big head droop to his hands, while the papoose squatted on his heels in the sand, and regarded him with eyes of wonder.

The minister was one of Choski's oldest, though by no means his closest, friends. He had always been a bit frightened at the way his words rapped themselves out and the dark eyes snapped beneath their rubble of grizzled brows; but he liked him in spite of his strangeness, though never had he seen him so strange as now.

When he had watched him in silence for many minutes, he remembered the orange and the apple which Mosset had put into his hands at departure, and, biting through the skin of the former, he sucked it truculently, his eyes keeping the while to his friend.

As he sucked greedily away, a road-runner, that ghostly bird of the desert, went by, and he bent backward to watch it, the orange still at his mouth like a yellow ball neatly balanced. Straightening, he continued to munch the skin of the so delectable fruit, until at last he finished with a sigh of content.

And still the old minister had not stirred, had not even lifted his bent head.

Choski put the apple to his lips, and ate that with almost the relish with which he had dispatched the orange. To the last seed he ate it, even chewing up the short stem. Then he leaned back against the rocks, and waited. Surely, he thought, something must be wrong with the old man. He remembered that an aged woman of his tribe had sat like that when she had what the white folk called rheumatism. But no man with rheumatism could walk as his friend had walked to-day. Was he dead? Old Walapi Charlie had sat like that, all day long, while his squaws had mourned, and the funeral pyre had been made ready. But, no, he could not be dead, for his boot stirred softly in the sand. What was it, then?

The time grew long. He began to shift restlessly, to stretch out one cramped leg and then the other, to yawn and look sighingly at the scraps of the

orange in the sand. Across the shimmering distance a pony moved tiredly toward camp, bearing a squaw on a pile of blankets, a basket of urnlike fashioning on her shoulder. He watched them out of sight.

Wriggling back into place, he looked again toward the bent and solitary figure of the old minister. Perhaps if he could have seen with other eyes, he might have glimpsed a shadowy figure of a woman, flower sweet in her grace and charm, who stood a little way off, looking at the man on the rocks with wondrous, luminous eyes.

"Choski," Footner said abruptly, lifting his head—and even to the papoose's untutored senses some change in him was apparent—"what really took you to that cabin, I wonder? Was it your mother? Or was it some god who is friendly to all hot-blooded, mistaken youth? Some god who believes in the things so many of us have forgotten?"

The papoose, thus strangely and unintelligibly adjured, wriggled his brown body in embarrassment, and blinked his solemn eyes. The breeze fanned up over the rocks, bringing the savor of the desert. Or was it some touch of lavender from the ghost lady's garments? The morning's radiance seemed to saturate the world.

Old John Footner arose, with a detaining gesture to the child.

"I'm going back," he said. "Wait here till Mosset comes for you."

Mosset saw him at the crest, and came leaping up to meet him.

"Forget something, doctor?" he asked.

"Yes, there's a sick Walapi across the desert that I ought to see this morning, if you'll take the papoose home. My niece is in the garden. You can give him to her," the old man said briefly.

And he went swinging off across the hills, with his long, energetic stride.



April

PRIMROSES broider all her kirtle blue,
And from her gold and gladly flowing hair
Bud-broken sweetness drifts adown the air,
As she comes tiptoe down the twinkling dew;
And at her step young winds awake and woo
Soft golden nods from jonquills, and ensnare
Secrets too sweet for prating bees to share—
Euphrosyne! The earth is born anew!

Trembles the plum tree in her bridal mist,
Whispers the green and silver of the grain,
The lilac boughs are clouds of amethyst,
And brimming daisies dapple all the plain.
Now Hope and Heart are at their rainbow tryst,
And thro' her tears the world laughs back again!

MARGARET BELLE HOUSTON.

How to Acquire a Graceful Bearing

By Dr. Lillian Whitney

A GRACEFUL carriage and an attractive bearing are impossible without poise. What is *poise*? Poise is the quality of being well balanced. Poise is equilibrium. Applied to the human form, it is that equal distribution of mental and physical forces which enables one to carry the body with ease, reposefulness, grace, and elegance. Writers upon this subject always refer their readers to the ancient Greeks as examples, par excellence, of perfection in bodily development. It is true, their statues seem imbued with life, and fairly breathe those qualities of easy power, majestic repose, superb poise, to which the men and women of those days attained.

They did not reach these heights of sublime development without effort; it is well known that physical culture entered into the daily régime of their lives, and was regarded as necessary to health and well-being as eating and sleeping—perhaps more so.

Poise is then the first essential to an easy, graceful carriage, but if the body is not well balanced—that is, properly proportioned—the defects must first be corrected. If, for instance, the weight is out of proportion to the height, it must be trained down to equalize it; if the torso is heavy and the legs small, the necessary measures to bring them more in accord with each other should be pursued. If the bony framework is perfect, and there is superabundance of flesh, there can be no poise, for fat is fatal to ease and grace of motion.

It is a frequent complaint of physical culturists that their pupils are even ignorant of the correct way to stand. Dressmakers are given to the same

complaint. This is an illustration of lack of poise. To stand properly—that is, to hold oneself correctly in the erect posture—the body is held as tall as possible without rising upon the toes; by this means the trunk is given its fullest length; all the organs are in position and have plenty of space; the head is held erect in such a manner that no muscles are strained; the chest expands easily and naturally; the abdomen is flat—and by the way, the back is flat, but more of that later on. The body is held easily and lightly upon the ball of the feet, and an imaginary line drawn straight through from head to foot enters at the top of the head, passes down directly in front of the ear, at the inner arm, through the center of the chest, abdomen, hips, drops out at the knees, and passes through the ball of the foot.

The number of men and women who are so formed, and who are able to maintain the body in perfect poise, are very few. Usually this imaginary line passes through the shoulders, because they slouch, through the spinal column at the waist, because the back “caves in,” and drops down at the heel, because the body is thrown forward and the weight sustained on the heels.

It is obviously impossible to acquire poise unless the body is correctly held, and in this respect much ignorance prevails. It is strange that so far as the minor defects of the spinal column, to which bad habits of posture give rise, are concerned, we, the civilized of the earth, fall so far below the animal and the savage. For who has ever seen either one of them crippled unless by accident?

Before we know the splendid results

achieved by the Indian custom of strapping the pappoose to a board and carrying it about in that manner, we were loud in our denunciation of the method, and called it savage. I use the word "method" advisedly, for scientists have adopted this method in treating the poor little sufferers with tubercular spines, and the results are very gratifying. The wonderfully erect, even stately and majestic carriage of some savages, achieved by the Indian custom of strapping the pappoose to a board and carrying it about in that manner, we were loud in our denunciation of the method, and called it savage. I use the word "method" advisedly, for scientists have adopted this method in treating the poor little sufferers with tubercular spines, and the results are very gratifying. The wonderfully erect, even stately and majestic carriage of some savages, "brought up on the board," proves the wisdom of this custom.

It is essential that the back be flat, and since it is so at birth, it is comparatively easy to keep it so if the habit of holding the body straight is acquired early in life. This can be accomplished by standing against a firm background, and "flattening" the body so that heels, spinal column, and head are on a level. Very few of us have normal backs. The so-called natural curves of the spine are all the result of muscular traction, and can be obliterated completely up to the age when all the bones have become ossified. By a "flat" back is not meant a stiff, rigid back; slight normal curves give grace

and ease of motion to the body, but the aim should be to keep the back straight, strong, and flexible.

The speed at which we are living has relegated mere walking to the background. If we are placed in a situation where walking becomes imperative, it is regarded as a hardship, and a few blocks finds us breathless and exhausted; we have forgotten how to walk, if we ever knew! Again the so-called semibarbarians

teach us a lesson in this respect, and show us how far we have strayed from what is preeminently nature's way of locomoting.

Take, for instance, the marvelous feats in walking performed by the little Japs in their recent war with Russia. The whole world was aghast at their ceaseless walking, walking, marching, marching, without effort and without a particle of fatigue; but then, we have had every evidence since that the little Japs are a remarkably well-poised people.

The caricatures presented by so many women in the immodest fashions of the moment, as they propel themselves along, hampered with tight skirts and in shoes

several sizes too small, is distressing to a sensible eye and revolting to an æsthetic one.

That walking may be a source of pleasure, health, and beauty, and give delight to the eye of the beholder as well, the clothing must, in the first place, be appropriate; the great organs in the trunk must have ample space in which to breathe; the feet must be sensibly shod, so that when the blood finds itself stimulated, and hastens to send its



A great aid in acquiring "poise" is to balance a flat object upon the head while walking indoors.

ruby glow into the extremities, it will find no constriction there, but can go coursing along merrily, rejuvenating and revivifying every part of the body with its life-giving elements.

It is well to practice walking, with the body properly poised, indoors, for a while, until the rhythm is acquired, as it were. Inexperienced walkers—soldiers, for instance—can walk better to music, but when the body is correctly balanced, and walking is done scientifically, one is conscious of a pleasurable rhythmic hum within, to which one subconsciously keeps pace.

A great aid in acquiring balance is to place a board, or other flat object, on the head, and, with the trunk erect, knees very slightly bent, walk up and down stairs, poising the body on the ball of the foot *only*; this gives lightness and elasticity to the step. In walking, motion is entirely from one leg to the other; the well-balanced play of all the muscles lends a sinuous grace to the gliding form that is highly attractive. This quality in Sarah Bernhardt is defined as "feline grace."

Almost every "write-up" on this remarkable actress and woman mentions the astounding elasticity and youthful buoyancy with which she is characterized, and wonder is expressed that these qualities have endured into comparative old age, for Bernhardt is almost seventy. Yet it is not astonishing; the only astonishing thing is that Bernhardt has had the common sense and strength of will to reject artificialities in her real life, and live as far as she possibly could strictly in

accordance with nature. She has been an object lesson to the whole world in conforming and adjusting oneself to circumstances, and in living one's *inner* life aside and apart from that life one shows the world. It is only in this way that one can attain the highest state of perfection.

By the way, some day, if my readers care, I should like to write them an article on the development of self-appreciation and self-culture.

Have we strayed far from the art of walking? No, since it is only by completely blending all the elements—spiritual, mental, and physical—that balance, equilibrium, *poise* are reached.

There are a great many exercises available for home practice which limber up stiff muscles, and that can be pursued with profit, but nothing is so successful in giving grace and suppleness to the form as Greek dances. In the large cities, classes have been formed in recent years—since the introduction of Greek dances on the stage—and many women have availed themselves of this opportunity, with the sole

object of developing an attractive bearing. Dancing, especially if it is with a distinct object in mind, stimulates all the activities, the Greek symbolic dances beautifying the mind as well as the body.

In pursuing Greek dancing, even in one's own room, it is best to adopt a Greek robe, and so surround oneself with the proper atmosphere. If possible, dancing should be done before a full-length mirror, in order to be pur-



Grace of bearing results from balancing the body on the ball of the foot.

poseful; that is, when it is not done in a class under the eye of an instructor.

DESCRIPTION OF GREEK GYMNAS- TIC DANCING.

With cymbals in hand, the beginner brings them together with a clash; then throwing her arms wide open, she makes a deep bow to herself. Imagine attempting such a movement clad in corsets with little or no bodily freedom!

The cymbals are now brought together at the rate of two-four waltz time, taking two steps forward and two backward, turning at the sound of the cymbals overhead. This is continued until she has danced a pretty waltz.

The next movement is quite different. Three steps are taken forward, clashing the cymbals together, then three steps are taken backward, still clashing. She is now on the line of march, perfecting her walk.

After marching straight ahead and straight backward for a few minutes, she now marches in hollow squares. Three steps are taken forward, three to the side, three steps backward, and three side steps to complete the square. This is done in quick time with no space given for breathing, the same being continued while exercising.

In this way a lesson in deep breathing is acquired.

The next exercise is to introduce the two-four time again, or the waltz. She dances the hop-waltz step three times to the right, lifting each foot as high as possible and resting first on one foot and then on the other, in the most graceful manner. Then the step is reversed, doing the same with the left foot. This is repeated until six minutes have elapsed, which is required by the Greek gymnasium dance.

The final motion is very graceful.

She bends her body back as far as possible, keeping her legs rigid and her arms outstretched; then the body is bent as far forward as possible. Backward and forward six or eight times. Then a deep bow is made to herself, and her dancing lesson is complete.

Entire relaxation of half an hour or longer should follow.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MARY.—Your liver is probably sluggish. Take phosphate of soda, a teaspoonful in a tumbler of water a half hour before meals. You can try to remove the patches with this application:

White precipitate.....1 dram
Subnitrate of bismuth.....1 dram
Benzoated lard.....1 ounce

Rub this well into the spots, carefully avoiding the eyes. It will peel off the skin, but that is the only way such blemishes can be removed unless you receive treatment by electrolysis from a specialist. If the skin becomes very much irritated from the use of the ointment apply cold cream to the parts,

BILLIE.—The following is a very good lotion for oily hair:

Bicarbonate of soda..... ¼ dram
Borax1¼ ounces
Cologne water..... 2 ounces
Rectified spirits..... 1 ounce
Tincture of cochineal..... ½ ounce
Distilled water, enough to make 16 ounces.

Apply this to the scalp once a week.

E. T. C.—Perhaps your "muddy" complexion is not so much the result of tan and outdoor exposure as it is dependent on constitutional causes. Torpor of the liver and general sluggishness, perhaps. Take sodium phosphate as suggested to Mary for a while, and apply to your face and neck this lotion, which is almost a specific for discolored skin:

Borax10 grains
Lime water..... 2 ounces
Essence of jasmine..... 1 ounce
Oil of almonds..... 1 ounce

ESMOND.—I quite agree with you that a few freckles on a pretty face add to its piquancy, but when they appear in droves and persist through the cold weather, they become blemishes. Try this solution, and if it is not decidedly beneficial, come to me again for a stronger application:

Muriate of ammonia.....¾ dram
Lavender water..... 2 drams
Distilled water..... 8 ounces

Touch the lotion to each freckle with a camel's-hair brush.

JANE.—A simple toilet water consists of:

Elder-flower water.....2 ounces
Distilled water.....2 ounces

JOHN.—Your hair may be "naturally" coarse and obstinate. It is, however, frequently so from lack of daily grooming. I would suggest that you use a good hair oil upon the scalp every night before retiring, rubbing it in well, and brushing the hair vig-

rously night and morning for at least ten minutes.

AN OILY HAIR TONIC.

Tincture of cantharides..... 2 drams
Glycerin ½ ounce
Castor oil..... ½ ounce
Bay rum..... 12 ounces

MATHILDE D.—I do not see why, from the measurements, if they were taken correctly, you think your bust too large. It seems to me the proportions are admirable. However, since you desire it, I will give here the remedies for bust reduction:

Aristol 2 grams
White vaseline..... 20 grams
Essence of peppermint..... 10 drops

Rub this ointment into the breasts gently but thoroughly; after that cover them with lint or cotton saturated with this solution:

Alum 2 grams
Acetate of lead..... 30 grams
Distilled water..... 400 grams

Over the saturated dressing place a layer of oiled silk, and bandage the dressing down with tolerable firmness. This treatment must be pursued each night for months before results are gained.

FLORA W.—I fancy the circulation in your arms is poor, and would suggest gentle hand and vibratory massage. The following is an exceedingly good ointment for

CHAPPED AND INFLAMED SKIN.

Salol 40 grains
Menthol 10 grains
Olive oil..... 1 dram
Lanolin ½ ounce
Cold cream..... ½ ounce

I am giving you here a well-known skin specialist's remedy for

SUNBURN.

Powdered carbonate of zinc..... 4 drams
Powdered carbonate of magnesia..... ½ dram
Lime water..... 4 ounces
Glycerin 1 ounce
Distilled witch-hazel water..... 1 ounce

Mix. Mop frequently over the surface.

MERCEDES.—I sympathize with you in the loss of your husband's hair. Yes, I will gladly write an article soon on baldness. There are two drugs which are said to prevent the formation of dandruff—ergot and tannin. I will give you a formula for one containing ergot:

Oil of ergot..... 2 ounces
Oleate of mercury..... 2 ounces

Perfume to taste.

This ointment is rubbed into the scalp with gentle massage every night at retiring. Only a very small quantity is necessary, as it is ap-

plied to the scalp, and not the hair. Be careful to mark the preparation *poison*, and keep it out of harm's way.

EVELYN.—You cannot expect success with any measures so long as you persist in wearing high-boned collars. You must discard them, and give your neck a chance to breathe and exercise. Incasing it in a vise is destructive to the muscles, and makes the skin dry and sallow. I would suggest further that you make a paste of:

Lemon juice..... 1 teaspoonful
Oil of bitter almonds..... 6 drops
Honey 1 ounce
Oatmeal enough.

Spread this on a linen bandage, and fasten it around your neck at bedtime, having first given the parts a thorough cleansing and massage treatment. Practice rotating the head upon the shoulders to limber up the tissues and develop the muscular structure.

HUNTER.—Yes, I am a firm believer in medicinal baths for rheumatic and neuralgic conditions. Here is an excellent formula:

Imported Green soap..... 12 ounces
Tincture of benzoin..... 4 ounces
Oil of turpentine..... 7 ounces
Oil of pine..... 7 ounces
Oil of rosemary..... 7 ounces

To an ordinary bath of hot water add one pint of this mixture. Remain in the bath, applying gentle friction to the body, for ten minutes. Rub down briskly with a rough towel, and go to bed. It is best taken at bedtime; and by the way, a cold compress should be kept on the brow during the bath.

DICKIE.—A reliable simple lotion may be ineffectual if the reasons giving rise to the condition are overlooked and allowed to go uncorrected. Bad habits of living are almost always at the root of these troublesome blemishes. Indiscretion in diet—eating a mass of indigestible stuff, sweets, pastries, and the like—the cigarette habit, late hours, and so forth.

Remember that before applying the lotion the face must be thoroughly cleansed with hot water and a medicinal soap—sulphur or zinc oxide—do not use a wash cloth, but your finger tips or a camel's-hair complexion brush, which you keep thoroughly clean by dipping it after use in a 1 per cent solution of carbolic acid.

Sulphur precipitate..... 1 dram
Spirits of camphor..... 1 dram
Glycerin 1 dram
Rose water..... 4 ounces

Daub on the pimples with absorbent cotton, and allow to dry in. It smarts only for a moment.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.



WE INVITE EVERY THIN MAN AND WOMAN HERE

EVERY READER OF THIS MAGAZINE TO GET FAT AT OUR EXPENSE

This is an invitation that no thin man or woman can afford to ignore. We'll tell you why. We are going to give you a wonderful discovery that helps digest the foods you eat—that puts good, solid flesh on people who are thin and under-weight, no matter what the cause may be—that makes brain in five hours and blood in four—that puts the red corpuscles in the blood which every thin man or woman so sadly needs. How can we do this? We will tell you. Science has discovered a remarkable concentrated treatment which increases cell growth, the very substance of which our bodies are made—a treatment that makes indigestion and other stomach troubles disappear as if by magic and makes an old dyspeptic or a sufferer from weak nerves or lack of vitality feel like a 2-year-old. This new treatment, which has proved a boon to every thin person, is called Sargol. Don't forget the name—"S-A-R-G-O-L." Nothing like it has ever been produced before. It is a revelation to women who have never been able to appear stylish in anything they wore because of their thinness. It is a godsend to every man who is under weight or is lacking in nerve force or energy. If you want a beautiful and well-rounded figure of symmetrical proportions, of which you can feel justly proud—if you want a body full of throbbing life and energy, write The Sargol Company, 380-R, Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y., today and we will send you, absolutely free, a 50c box of Sargol that will prove all we claim. Take one with every meal, and in five minutes after you take the first concentrated tablet of this precious product it will commence to unfold its virtues, and it has by actual demonstration often increased the weight at the rate of one pound a day. But you say you want proof? Well, here you are. Here is the statement of those who have tried—who have been convinced—and who will swear to the virtues of this marvelous preparation.

REV. GEORGE W. DAVIS says:

"I have made a faithful trial of the Sargol treatment and must say it has brought to me new life and vigor. I have gained twenty pounds and now weigh 170 pounds, and, what is better, I have gained the days of my boyhood. It has been the turning point of my life. My health is now fine. I don't have to take any medicine at all and never want to again."

MRS. A. I. RODENHEISER writes:

"I have gained immensely since I took Sargol, for I only weighed about 106 pounds when I began using it and now I weigh 130 pounds, so really this makes twenty-four pounds. I feel stronger and am looking better than ever before, and now I carry rosy cheeks, which is something I could never say before."

"My old friends who have been used to seeing me with a thin, long face, say that I am looking better than they have ever seen me before, and father and mother are so pleased to think I have got to look so well and weigh so heavy 'for me.'"

CLAY JOHNSON says:

"Please send me another ten-day treatment. I am well pleased with Sargol. It has been the light of my life. I am getting back to my proper weight again. When I began to take Sargol I only weighed 128 pounds, and now, four weeks later, I am weighing 153 pounds and feeling fine. I don't have that stupid feeling every morning that I used to have. I feel good all the time. I want to put on about five pounds of flesh and that will be all I want."

F. GAGON writes:

"Here is my report since taking the Sargol treatment. I am a man 67 years of age, and was all run down to the very bottom. I had to quit work, as I was so weak. Now, thanks to Sargol, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds with 25 days' treatment. I cannot tell you how happy I feel. All my clothes are getting too tight. My face has a good color and I never was so happy in my life."

MRS. VERNIE ROUSE says:

"Sargol is certainly the grandest treatment I ever used. It has helped me greatly. I could hardly eat anything and was not able to sit up three days out of a week, with stomach trouble. I took only two boxes of Sargol and can eat anything and it don't hurt me and I have no more headache. My weight was 120 pounds and now I weigh 140 and feel better than I have for five years. I am now as fleshy as I want to be, and shall certainly recommend Sargol, for it does just exactly what you say it will do."

You may know some of these people or know somebody who knows them. We will send you their full address if you wish, so that you can find out all about Sargol and the wonders it has wrought.

Probably you are now thinking whether all this can be true. Stop it. Write us at once and we will send you, absolutely free, a 50c package of the most wonderful tablets you have ever seen. No matter what the cause of your thinness is from, Sargol makes thin folks fat, but we don't ask you to take our word for it. Simply cut the coupon below and inclose 10c stamps to help cover the distribution expenses and Uncle Sam's mail will bring you the most valuable package you ever received.

COME, EAT WITH US AT OUR EXPENSE

This coupon entitles any thin person to one 50c. package of Sargol, the concentrated Flesh Builder (provided you have never tried it), and that 10c. is inclosed to cover postage, packing, etc. Read our advertisement printed above, and then put 10c. in stamps in letter to-day, with this coupon, and the full 50c. package will be sent to you by return of post. Address: The Sargol Company, 380-R, Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y. Write your name and address plainly, and **PIN THIS COUPON TO YOUR LETTER.**

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

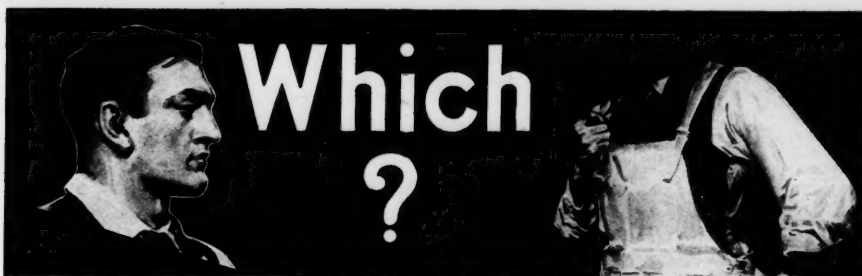
Soda crackers are extremely sensitive to moisture.

Before the advent of Uneeda Biscuit the only persons who ever tasted fresh, crisp soda crackers were the people in the bakeries.

Now that we have Uneeda Biscuit—we have perfectly baked soda crackers—perfectly kept.

No moisture can reach them—no contaminating influences can affect their flavor—their goodness is imprisoned only to be liberated by you for you when you open the package. Five cents.

**NATIONAL BISCUIT
COMPANY**



\$6,000 for Your Head

\$600 for Your Body

As a member of the headless army you are a piece of mechanism with an earning capacity limited to about \$600 a year—with the scrap heap at the end of the road.

As a **head** man you can multiply that income by ten, and more—and meet **success now**.

You **can** join the **head** class. Don't argue, don't hesitate, don't compromise with failure by saying "I can't." Get on the **positive** side of yourself. Just think of the four hundred men, once poorly paid, who, every month voluntarily report to the International Correspondence Schools advancement in salary and position **due to I. C. S. help**. Some of these stories of success read like veritable romances. Back of them is the sturdy "I can" spirit, and the ability to read and write.

The same road is open to you—no matter who you are, what you do, where you live, what you earn, or for what well-paid occupation you wish to qualify.

It costs nothing to find out **how** you can qualify through I. C. S. training—**Mark this coupon and learn how to make your HEAD earn ten times as much as your BODY.**



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Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

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Mine Foreman
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Mechan. Engineer
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Electric Railways
Structural Engineer
R. R. Construction
Metal Mining
English Branches
Gas Engineer
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Civil Service
Architect
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Commercial English
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Present Occupation _____
Street and No. _____
City _____ State _____

My Finest Car

By R. E. Olds, Designer

Reo the Fifth—despite its price—marks the best I know. It is My Farewell Car, based on 25 years of experience. And no man will ever, in my estimation, build a much better car.

My Limit

In 25 years tens of thousands of men have come to have faith in me.

I say to them and to others that this Farewell Car shows the utmost of which I am capable.

In all the 18 months which I spent on this car the selling price was never considered.

Reo the Fifth is my finest creation. It is now the only car built in this mammoth plant.

So all my past prestige, and all this concern's future, are at stake on this single car.

The Standard Car

I don't mean that men can't build more costly cars—heavier, larger, more pow-

erful cars. I have built them myself—up to 6-cylinder sixties.

But most men who know have come to seek moderation. They have proved that excesses in size, weight and power are useless and immensely expensive.

The popular car of the future will be the 30 to 35-horsepower, four-cylinder car. So I have adopted this standard type for My Farewell Car.

My claim is this:

It is utterly impossible to use better materials, better workmanship or devices than I use in this car.

It will never be possible, at any price, to get more of real worth in a car.

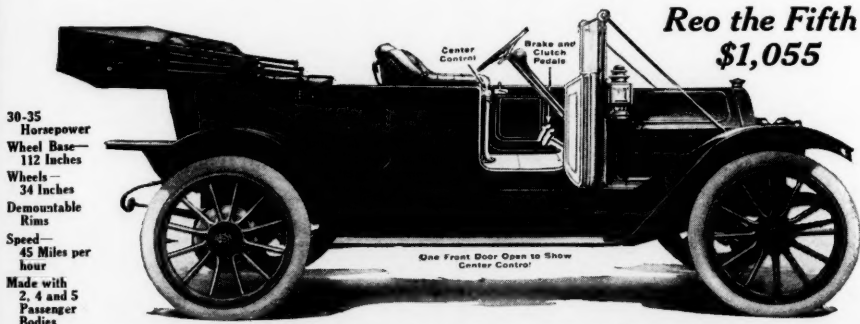
Price Not Fixed

The present price—\$1,055—is no measure at all of the worth of this car. My own idea is that the price is impossible.

It is based on an output probably beyond our powers. It is based on a very low cost for materials—much lower than for years. It is based on ideals of utter efficiency which even this plant can't reach.

So this price is not fixed. All our contracts with dealers provide for advance. Reo the Fifth should not be judged by this altruistic price. Judge it solely by the merits of the car.

Reo the Fifth
\$1,055



Top and windshield not included in price. We equip this car with mohair top, side curtains and slip cover, windshield, gas tank and speedometer—all for \$100 extra. Self-starter, if wanted, \$20 extra.

Where It Excels

My advantage in designing lies in 25 years of experience. I have built tens of thousands of cars, in 24 models, and I know all the possible troubles.

My axles and driving shafts are much larger than necessary, and I build them of nickel steel.

My connections are built of Vanadium steel. And I prove every alloy by analysis.

My differential was designed for 45 horsepower. My gears are tested in a crushing machine of 50 tons' capacity.

My carburetor is doubly heated, to deal with poor gasoline. The magneto I use must pass a radical test.

Unusual Care

My excess of caution; my big margins of safety, result from decades of experience. I am too old in this business to take any chances.

I carry inspection to the extreme. I insist on repeated tests.

I use more Roller Bearings than were ever before

employed in this type of car. There are only three ball bearings in Reo the Fifth, and two are in the fan.

So with every feature. Each is the highest, the costliest type known to motor car engineering.

No Petty Economies

The wheel base is long, the wheels are large, the car is over-tired.

The body finish consists of 17 coats. Even the engine is nickel trimmed.

The upholstery is deep—made of genuine leather—filled with genuine hair.

The design of the car shows the last touch of up-to-dateness.

Every detail of this car breathes of utter perfection.

Center Control No Side Levers No Reaching

This car also embodies my new center control. The gear shifting is done by this center cane-handle—by

a slight, easy motion in each of four directions.

There are no side levers to block either front door. Both of the brakes are operated by foot pedals. One pedal also operates the clutch.

Thus the driver may sit, as he should sit, on the left hand side. He is next to the cars which he passes. He is on the up side of the road. Heretofore this was possible in electric cars only.

This simple form of control—the best ever invented—is exclusive to Reo the Fifth.

Ask for the Book

Reo the Fifth is the most interesting car of the season. It comes pretty close to finality.

It is My Farewell Car, and the price is sensational. It is a car that you should know.

Ask for our catalog, giving all details and picturing all the body designs. When we mail the book we will tell you where to see the car. Address,

**R. M. Owen & Co., General Sales Agents for
Reo Motor Car Co., Lansing, Mich.**

Canadian Factory, St. Catharines, Ontario

(36)

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and we send you a
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LEGALLY GUARANTEED

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\$97.50 per carat is the world's lowest price for genuine brilliant perfect cut diamonds. \$97.50 per carat is the importer's price direct to you (15 percent less than wholesale), saving you nearly half the price of your retail jeweler. Note these remarkable prices:
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\$48.75
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Best grade cedar canoe for \$20

We sell direct, saving you \$20.00 on a canoe. All canoes cedar and copper fastened. We make all sizes and styles, also power canoes. Write for free catalog giving prices with retailer's profit cut out. We are the largest manufacturers of canoes in the world. **DETROIT BOAT CO., 88 Bellevue Ave., Detroit, Mich.**



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Bright, sparkling, beautiful. For brilliancy they equal the genuine, standing all test and puzzle experts. One twentieth the expense. Sent free with privilege of examination. For particulars, prices, etc., address

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Just what the name implies—Peerless, unapproached, unequalled, unrivaled, is an accurate description of the **Peerless Patent Book Form Cards**

They are more than a card; they are an expression of personality, individuality. They are not only better, but they represent actual economy, because they eliminate waste. Being in book form, every card is used just when detached. They are always flat, unmarred and clean, and all the edges are perfectly smooth and sharp. They can only be appreciated by being seen and used. Send today for a sample tab and detach the cards one by one as you would use them. Their perfection will thrill you.

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Stuart's Plaster-Pads are different from the truss, being medicine applicators made self-adhesive properly to hold the parts securely in place. No Straps, Buckles or Springs—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or compress against the public bone. Thousands suffering from most obstinate cases, have successfully treated themselves in the privacy of the home without hindrance from work. **SOFT AS VELVET—EASY TO APPLY, INEXPENSIVE.** Awarded Gold Medal and Diploma, International Exposition, Rome. Process of recovery is natural, leaving no further use for the truss. We prove what we say by sending you a trial of Plapao absolutely free.

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ROMANCES OF AMÉDÉE ACHARD

The charm that is always to be found in the works of the best French writers, quick, terse description, brilliant dialogue, rapidly shifting scenes leading up to intense climaxes, is well sustained in

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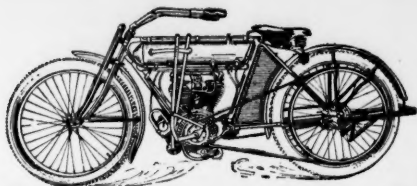
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It's a YALE Year

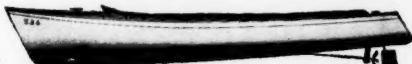
Always a leader, the Yale today is especially prominent by reason of the fact that it has the maximum number of real 1912 improvements. Some of these may be had on the Yale only; no other motorcycle can give you all of them.

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More drop forgings than any other motorcycle; the V-A Shock Absorber "that Absorbs the Shock;" 2 3/4 in. Studded Tires; Auto Fender Mud Guards; Eclipse Free Engine Clutch; Pull High Forks; Eccentric Yoke; Triple Anchored Handlebars; Muffler Cut-Out, comfortable saddle position and Mechanical Oil on Twins.

Yale 1912 literature, describing the four new Yale models: 4 H. P. to 7 H. P. Twin is ready—ask for it.

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YOU CAN BUILD THIS HANDSOME POWER BOAT

Only \$25 for knockdown frames, patterns, and instructions for this 23 footer—speed 9 1/2 to 14 miles an hour. Everything made simple. Easy to build if you can handle hammer, saw and screw driver. We also furnish complete knockdown boat. Or patterns alone at from \$8 to \$12 according to design. Thousands of Brooks boats in use and building now. It's fun—and profit—and summer pleasure to build a boat.

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Today—just a postal. Mailed free. Scores of models and sizes of all kinds illustrated. Save 1/2 the boat builder's price. Get our offer. Address

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10 DAYS FREE TRIAL

prepaid, to any place in the United States without a cent deposit in advance, and allow ten days free trial from the day you receive it. If it does not suit you in every way and is not all or more than we claim for it and a better bicycle than you can get anywhere else regardless of price, or if for any reason whatever you do not wish to keep it, ship it back to us at our expense for freight and you will not be out one cent.

LOW FACTORY PRICES

We sell the highest grade bicycles direct from factory to rider at lower prices than any other house. We save you \$10 to \$25 middlemen's profit on every bicycle. Highest grade models with Puncture-Proof tires, imported Roller chains, pedals, etc., at prices no higher than cheap mail order bicycles; also reliable medium grade models at unheard of low prices.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED

In each town and district to ride and exhibit a sample 1912 "Ranger" Bicycle furnished by us. You will be astonished at the money/very low prices for our special offer. DO NOT BUY a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you receive our catalogue and learn our low prices and liberal terms. BICYCLE DEALERS, you can sell our bicycles under your own name plate at double our prices. Orders filled the day received. **SECOND HAND BICYCLES**—limited number taken in trade by our Chicago retail stores will be closed out at once, at \$3 to \$8 each. Descriptive bargain list mailed free.

TIRES, COASTER-BRAKE

near wheels, inner tubes, lamps, cyclometers, parts, repairs and everything in the bicycle line at half usual prices. DO NOT WAIT, but write today for our Large Catalogue. It only costs a postal to get everything.

See beautifully illustrated and containing a great fund of interesting matter and useful information. Write It Now.

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Other sizes and styles at \$25, \$75, \$100, \$125. See our Catalog. Sent Free.

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Famous Yale and Harvard models—highest grade materials—finest finish—the strongest canoe built. In each end is a Mullins Buoyancy Pad, which has sufficient buoyancy to float a capsized, water-filled canoe and keep two people afloat. No other canoe on the market has this essential feature.

We also manufacture steel launches, row boats, etc.

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If it does not suit you in every way

and is not all or more than we

claim for it and a better bicycle than

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ship it back to us at our expense

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out one cent.

We sell the highest grade bicycles

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lower prices than any other house.

We save you \$10 to \$25 middle-

men's profit on every bicycle. High-

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cheap mail order bicycles; also

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In each town and district to ride

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Bicycle furnished by us. You will

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DO NOT BUY a bicycle or a pair

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CLES—limited number taken in

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For the Sweet-Toned



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Piano
\$175

30 Days' Free Trial

IN YOUR OWN HOME

We Pay the Freight If the piano proves to be all we claim for it and you decide to buy it, these are the terms of sale:

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No cash payment down. No interest on payments. No extras of any kind. Piano stool and scarf Free.

Sold direct from the maker to you at a guaranteed saving of \$100. No dealer's profit for you to pay.

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"You'd never think I stained my hair after I use Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain. The Stain doesn't hurt the hair as dyes do, but leaves it nice and fluffy, with a beautiful brown color."

It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, doesn't rub off, it is free from lead, sulphur, silver and all metallic compounds. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain sealed wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Potter's Hygienic Supply Co., 1523 Gorton Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

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32 Hair Switch Sent on Approval. Choice of Natural wavy or straight hair. Send lock of your hair, and I will mail a 22 inch short stem fine human hair switch to match. If you find it a big savings worth \$2 in ten days, or sell it and GET YOUR SWITCH FREE. Extra shades a little more. Include 10c postage. Free beauty book showing latest style of hair dressing—also high grade switches, pompadours, wigs, puffs, etc. Women wanted to sell my hair goods.
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18-20-22 and 27 ft. boats at proportionate prices. All launches tested and fitted with Detroit two-cycle reversible engines with speed controlling lever—simplest engine made—starts without cranking—has only 3 moving parts—anyone can run it. The Safe Launch—absolutely non-sinkable—needs no boathouse. All boats fitted with air-tight compartments—cannot sink, leak or rust. We are sole owners of the patents for the manufacture of rolled steel, lock-seamed steel boats. Orders filled the day they are received. Boats shipped to every part of the world. Free Catalog. Steel Howboats, \$20. (50)
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Would you possess that strange, mysterious power which charms and fascinates men and women, influences their thoughts, controls their desires and makes you supreme master of every situation? Life is full of alluring possibilities for those who master the secrets of hypnotic influence; for those who develop their magnetic powers. You can learn at home, cure diseases and bad habits without drugs, win the friendship and love of others, increase your income, gratify your ambitions, drive worry and trouble from your mind, improve your memory, overcome domestic difficulties, give the most thrilling entertainment ever witnessed and develop a wonderfully magnetic will power that will enable you to overcome all obstacles to your success. You can hypnotize people instantaneously—quick as a flash—put yourself or anyone else to sleep at any hour of the day or night—banish pain or suffering. Our free book tells you the secrets of this wonderful science. It explains exactly how you can use this power to better your condition in life. It is enthusiastically endorsed by ministers of the gospel, lawyers, doctors, business men and society women. It benefits everybody. It costs nothing. We give it away to advertise our institution. Write for it to-day.

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keeps my skin in healthy condition.

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ANY STYLE **DIAMONDS**
at 1/40 the cost--IN SOLID GOLD RINGS
Stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first--then pay.
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MONEY IN BOAT LIVERY!
Can ship in any quantity. Need No Boat House. Never Leak, Rust, Check, Crack or Rot. Absolutely safe. Every boat has water-tight compartments, so cannot sink. 20 different designs. Demonstrator Agents Wanted in Every Community. Write TODAY for FREE Illustrated Catalog and Special Factory Prices. Michigan Steel Boat Co., 85 Bellevue Ave., Detroit, Mich.



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Use these absolutely safe and harmless waters for 30 days and then let

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FOR SKIN AND HAIR

It is so because of its extreme purity, delicate yet effective medication, and refreshing fragrance. It costs but little more than ordinary soaps, wears to a wafer and gives comfort and satisfaction every moment of its use for toilet, bath and nursery.

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Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick. Makes shaving a luxury instead of a torture. In Nickel Box, at stores or by mail, post-paid, 25c.

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Rate, 50c. a line, or \$2.61¼ a line, which includes AINSLEE'S and POPULAR Magazines, making a total of 4,000,000 readers—the cheapest and best Classified Advertising medium on the market. Next issue of SMITH'S closes April 5th.

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LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE wanted. Splendid income assured right man to act as our representative after learning our business thoroughly by mail. Former experience unnecessary. All we require is honesty, ability, ambition and willingness to learn a lucrative business. No soliciting or traveling. This is an exceptional opportunity for a man in your section to get into a big paying business without capital and become independent for life. Write at once for full particulars. E. R. Marden, Pres., The Nat'l. Co-Op. Real Estate Co., L 338 Marden Bldg., Washington, D. C.

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Ostermoor Mattress, \$15.

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Smile

Years ago it was proved that the mattress you sleep on has a big influence on health, because it makes or mars the recuperative power of sleep. The mattress that gives a nation of workers the rest they need is the Ostermoor. Find out why in our

144-PAGE BOOK—WRITE FOR IT—FREE

It gives the testimony of half a century of users, proving that Ostermoor comfort lasts for generations. The thousands of filmy layers of cotton, built together by the exclusive Ostermoor process, make a mattress that never mats, packs nor needs remaking. The book tells a wonderful story; get it! Avoid "just-as-good" imitations. The trade mark Ostermoor is your guarantee. If desired, we'll ship mattress, 6 ft. 3 in. long by 4 ft. 6 in. wide, 45 lbs., express prepaid, same day we get your order. Shipped so that it reaches you in perfect condition. Money back if you want it after 30 nights' trial. **Be sure to send for the Book.**

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Constructed of the choicest quarter-sawn Oak, 54 inch top closed, 90 inch extension. Massive substantial—no furniture is better made and—

Our Factory Price To You \$19.00

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MULLINS STEEL BOATS CAN'T SINK

Because they are built like Government Torpedo Boats, of tough, puncture-proof steel plates, pressed to rigid form and so securely joined together that a leak is impossible. The Mullins Steel Boats are guaranteed against puncture, leaking, waterlogging, warping, drying out, opening seams, and NEVER REQUIRE CALKING.

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Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements.

Don't Doctor Corns With Steel

Don't pare them. That just removes the top layer. It leaves the main part to grow.

A slip of the blade may mean infection. Sometimes a dangerous infection.

This form of home surgery should be ended forever.

A few years ago a chemist invented the B & B wax—the heart of the Blue-jay plaster.



A in the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.
B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.
D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

Now you simply apply this plaster. It is done in a jiffy. The pain instantly stops, and the corn is forgotten.

This wonderful wax gently loosens the corn. In two days the whole corn, root and branch, comes out. No soreness, no discomfort.

Please don't doubt it.

Fifty million corns have been removed in this way. Millions of people know it. Just try it yourself, and never again will you let corns cause you pain.

Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunions Plasters (159)

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of B & B Handy Package Absorbent Cotton, etc.



YOU CAN MAKE CIGARETTES LIKE THESE
A Practical Novelty for Cigarette Smokers
TURKO CIGARETTE ROLLER
Sent postpaid for **25cts.** Address,
Turko Roller Co., 135 William St., New York

The next issue, the June number of SMITH'S, will contain thirty-two additional pages of stories—among which will be the first half of a big, stirring two-part novel by W. B. M. Ferguson.

Detroit Marine Engine

Guaranteed Five Years

You are the sole judge of the engine and its merits. 25,000 satisfied users. Greatest Engine Bargain ever offered. Nothing complicated or liable to get out of order. Waterproof ignition system. Money refunded if you are not satisfied.

Only 3 Moving Parts.

Starts without cranking. Reverses while in motion.

Demonstrator Agents wanted in every bustling community. Special wholesale prices on the first outfit sold. Single cyl., 2-4 h. p.; double cyl., 2-20 h. p.; 3 cyl., 2-30 h. p. Suitable for any boat, canoe or cruiser. Also railroad tugs. All engines complete with boat fittings. Free Catalog.

Detroit Engine Works, 1204 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.

WINCHESTER'S HYPOPHOSPHITES OF LIME AND SODA (DR. CHURCHILL'S Formula) and WINCHESTER'S SPECIFIC PILL ARE THE BEST REMEDIES FOR

Exhausted
or
Debilitated

NERVE FORCE

They contain no Mercury, Iron, Cantharides, Morphia, Strychnia, Opium, Alcohol, Cocaine, etc.

The Specific Pill is purely vegetable, has been tested and prescribed by physicians, and has proven to be the best and most effective treatment known to medical science for restoring impaired Vitality, no matter how originally caused, as it reaches the root of the ailment. Our remedies are the best of their kind, and contain only the best and purest ingredients that money can buy and science produce; therefore we cannot offer free samples.

Price, **ONE DOLLAR** per Box, by First-class Mail

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I have taken this excellent remedy (Winchester's Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda) as a Nerve Food by my Physician's order. It has so greatly benefited me that I hope other sufferers may be helped likewise.—Miss ELLA H. JOHNSON, Irvington, New York.

I don't think there is a more honest remedy for Nervous Debility than your Specific Pill.—B. R., Princeton, Ills.

I find your remedies excellent.—Assistant Attorney General, N. D.

Send for free treatise securely sealed.

Winchester & Co., 1019 Beekman Bldg., N. Y.

Est. 50 years.

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Kodak Simplicity

Every step in photography has been made simple by the Kodak system. Loading in daylight, focusing without a ground glass (no focusing at all with the smaller sizes), daylight development and Velox printing—these are Kodak features.

The Kodak Film Tank means more, however, than the mere doing away with the dark-room—it means better results. All the guess work of the old dark-room methods of tentative development is done away with. Certain ready prepared powders are dissolved in a certain amount of water of a certain temperature; development then continues for a certain length of time. It's all by rule, and thereby gives the best possible result from every exposure.

The Experience is in the Tank.

EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY,

ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*

Complete Kodak Catalogue
free at the dealers or by mail.

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The Pony Express A Pioneer of the Bell System

FIFTY years ago the Pony Express became the most efficient messenger service ever known.

Pony riders carried messages from Missouri to California, nearly two thousand miles across mountains and deserts, through blizzards and sand storms, constantly in danger of attack by hostile Indians.

Fresh horses were supplied at short intervals, and the messages, relayed from rider to rider, were delivered in the record-breaking time of seven and one-half days.

Railroad and telegraph took the place

of the Pony Express, carrying messages across this western territory. Today the telephone lines of the Bell System have done more, for they have bound together ranch and mine and camp and village.

This network of telephone lines, following the trails of the Indians, connects with the telegraph to carry messages throughout the world.

By means of Universal Bell Service the most remote settler is no longer isolated, but has become a constantly informed citizen of the American Commonwealth.

**AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES**

One Policy

One System

Universal Service

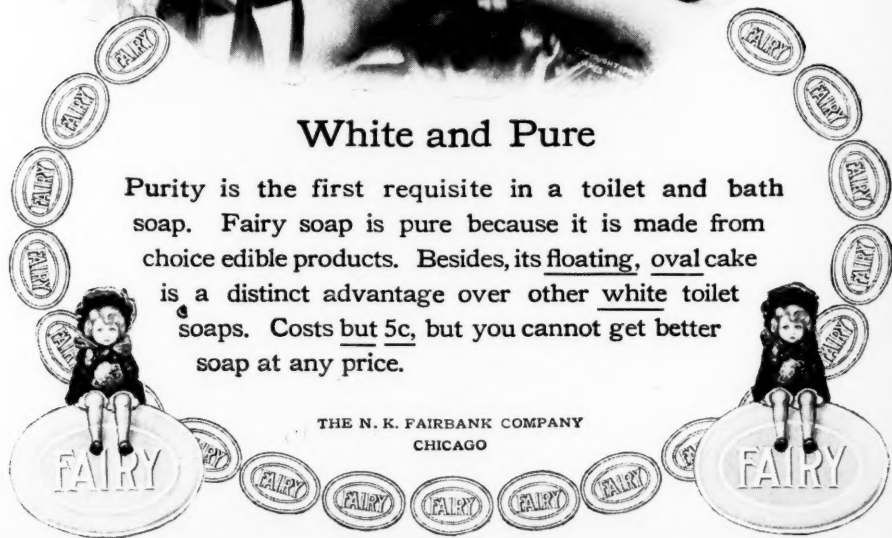
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"HAVE YOU A LITTLE 'FAIRY' IN YOUR HOME?"

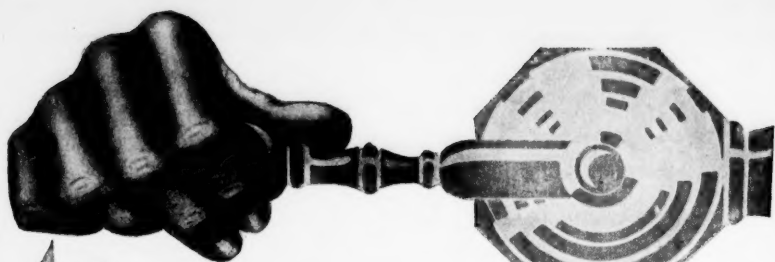


White and Pure

Purity is the first requisite in a toilet and bath soap. Fairy soap is pure because it is made from choice edible products. Besides, its floating, oval cake is a distinct advantage over other white toilet soaps. Costs but 5c, but you cannot get better soap at any price.



THE N. K. FAIRBANK COMPANY
CHICAGO



**Drink
a glass of**

Coca-Cola

—see how it bubbles and
sparkles with life! Hold it up
—watch the sun strike color
from the amber. It suggests
joy and laughter—to the tired
and thirsty it is almost like
the smile of a friend.

Taste it—cold, refreshing,
delicious — overflow-
ing with vim and
snap.

Our new
booklet, telling
of Coca-Cola vindi-
cation at Chattanooga,
for the asking,



**Demand the Genuine as made by
THE COCA-COLA CO.
ATLANTA, GA.**

**Whenever
you see an
Arrow think
of Coca-Cola.**